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INDIA AND THE INDIANS

FELIX TIPNIS.

[*Frontispiece.*

INDIA AND THE INDIANS

BY EDWARD F. ELWIN

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AUTHOR OF "INDIAN JOTTINGS," "THIRTY-FOUR YEARS IN POONA CITY," "STORIES OF INDIAN BOYS," ETC.

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1913

PREFACE

INDIA is really waking up, but she is doing so in her own Indian way. For some years past it has been one of my daily duties to arouse an Indian boy, and I know exactly how an Indian wakes. It is a leisurely process. He slowly stretches his legs and rubs his eyes, and it is at least ten minutes before he can be said to be really wide awake. And every morning I have to say exactly the same thing: "Now remember, Felix, to say your prayers; then go and wash your hands and face, and then feed the pony." And if on any particular morning I were to leave this reminder unsaid, and Felix left any, or all of these duties, undone, and I were to ask him the reason, he would reply, "You did not tell me."

With India waking up, there never was a time when she stands more in need of some kindly person at her side to tell her what to do. She needs to be taught to say her prayers, because with the old religion gone and the True Faith dimly understood, India would be in the appalling

condition of a great country without a religion. We need to tell her to wash her hands and face, because there are certain elementary matters of sanitation which must be attended to if India is ever to become a wholesome and prosperous country. And we have got to teach her how to work, because India wide awake, but idle, might easily become a source of great mischief.

Every Englishman who takes pleasure in the sense of Empire ought to realise that it brings with it great responsibilities, and therefore that every Englishman has a measure of responsibility towards India. We must be taking care that, if when she is wide awake she fails to fulfil her great vocation, at anyrate she shall have no cause to utter against us the reproach, You never told me.

A better understanding of what India and the people who live in it are really like, seems to be the necessary preparation for sympathy and work of any sort connected with that country; and to help, in however small a degree, to bring about this end is the object of this book. I have had unusually favourable and varied opportunities for getting to know intimately the inner side of Indian life and character during a somewhat long residence in this country. The contents of the book are exceedingly miscellaneous because the daily experiences have been equally so. Everything that is told is the

outcome of my own personal observations amongst a people to whom I am deeply attached, and I have taken the utmost pains to record nothing of which I was not sure, and to verify everything concerning which I was doubtful.

The photographs were all taken by Brother Arthur of our Society.

EDWARD F. ELWIN.

YERANDAWANA,
POONA DISTRICT, INDIA.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Introductory	1
II.	Indian Hospitality	11
III.	The Indian View of Nature and Architecture	17
IV.	Indian Employers of Labour	24
V.	The Indian Postal Service	32
VI.	Indians and English Customs	40
VII.	Indian Unpunctuality	48
VIII.	Indian Poverty	54
IX.	Indian Art	60
X.	The Indian Village	66
XI.	Indian Entertainments	74
XII.	The Conversion of India	83
XIII.	Mission Work in India	89
XIV.	Indian Music	98
XV.	Indian Meals	105
XVI.	Hindu Philosophy	111
XVII.	Hindus and Religion	117
XVIII.	Religious Phases in India	124
XIX.	Games in India	130
XX.	Indian Wrestlers	137
XXI.	Books in India	143
XXII.	Indian Pageants	151
XXIII.	The Indian Character	157
XXIV.	Religious Controversy in India	164
XXV.	Wild Beasts in India	170

CHAP.		PAGE
XXVI.	Some Indian Animals	176
XXVII.	The Indian World of Nature	182
XXVIII.	Insects in India	188
XXIX.	The Indian Ascetic	196
XXX.	The Indian Widow	204
XXXI.	Wrongdoing in India	212
XXXII.	Property in India	221
XXXIII.	East and West Travelling	228
XXXIV.	Customs of East and West	234
XXXV.	Servants in India	241
XXXVI.	The Educated Hindu	247
XXXVII.	Unfinished Plans in India	256
XXXVIII.	Gifts in India	263
XXXIX.	Proverbial Sayings about India	270
XL.	Indian Unrest	278
XLI.	The English in India	288
XLII.	Dishonesty in India	295
XLIII.	Indian Mohammedans	302
XLIV.	Night Alarms in India	309
XLV.	The Indian Washerman	317
XLVI.	Agriculture in India	328
XLVII.	East and West on board Ship	337
	Index	347

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Felix Tipnis	*Frontispiece*	
Swithun's New Home in the Village . .	*To face page*	16
Yerandawana Church from a Distance .	„	20
The Indian Village Postman . . .	„	38
Narayen Khilari, a Farmer's Son . .	„	42
The Kindly Hindu Neighbour and His Family	„	48
A Modern House in Poona City . . .	„	60
Mrs Salome Zadhaw	„	66
Ragu, the Night-watchman . . .	„	72
The Yerandawana Village Wrestlers . .	„	138
Nirari Bhosle, the Mischievous Village Boy .	„	168
Milking the Buffalo	„	180
Dowd Pheride, the Egg-merchant's Son .	„	198
Sarla Kalu, the Yerandawana Widow .	„	206
The Indian Butler	„	242
The Cemetery Cross	„	268

INDIA AND THE INDIANS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Misconceptions about India. Hinduism. An "infernal religion." Hindu mythology. Ascetics. Translations of Hindu sacred books. Modern and ancient ways of teaching Christianity. Danger of the incorporation of a false Christ into Hinduism. Hindu India as it really is. Definitions of "What is Hinduism?" from representative Hindus.

INDIA is not really quite so mysterious a country as it appears to be on first acquaintance. But you have to live there a long time before things begin to reveal their real shape. It is only on the ground of long residence, and frequent and often close intercourse with a great variety of Indians, that I venture now and then to give some of my experiences to others. India remains almost an unknown land to a large number of people in spite of all that has been written or spoken about it, and it is hard to dissipate the many misconceptions which exist concerning the country. Some of these misconceptions came into being years ago, but they have become stereotyped.

They were presumably the outcome of hasty conclusions drawn from superficial knowledge. But even visitors to India often view the country in the light of preconceived ideas which they have either heard or read of, and they therefore fail to see things as they really are.

It is inevitable in dealing with Indian things that the defects of the people of the country should occupy rather a prominent place. The cause is their misfortune and not their fault. They have many delightful natural characteristics, and the years that I have lived amongst them have only served to increase my deep affection for the people of India, and the real pleasure that I find in their society. The defects of Hindus come from their religion, which is deeply steeped in idolatry, and neither gives them a code of morality, nor grace to keep one if it had been given. The strongest denunciations of Hinduism come from the people themselves. I often repeat what the old Brahmin, who lived and died a Hindu, said when he roared out to me, "It is a most infernal religion." And he proceeded to give instances of its infernal nature which it is impossible to print, but which justified the expression.

A Hindu admits the beauty of a moral life, but puts it aside as impossible of fulfilment. He has no creed, and cannot tell you what he believes. He is in doubt and uncertainty both as regards where man came from, and whither he is going. Nearly every Hindu is an idolater at some time

or other, if only to please his wife, or to oblige a friend. Some, nowadays, try to explain away the custom as being merely an ancient tradition, but on that account to be respected; or as edifying for the ignorant, who cannot find God in any other way.

The histories of the gods, like all heathen mythology, consist of tales, some picturesque, some foolish, some dull and childish, some obscene. How far the educated Hindu believes them it is difficult to know. Those that are obviously absurd he will say are allegorical, and in spite of their diversity he will maintain that they are all manifestations of one god. The uneducated rustic, so far as he is familiar with these stories, believes them.

The ascetic life, at any rate as represented by the professional ascetics of India, is not held in admiration by the people of the country. The real character of most of the wandering ascetics is perfectly well known. But the people fear their curse; hence they give them alms, and a measure of outward respect. That their profession and their conduct are so often in contradiction does not apparently excite surprise.

Some English translations of Hindu sacred books must be taken with a certain amount of caution. Enthusiastic and poetically inclined minds have produced translations which can only be said to remotely represent the originals (if we are to accept the opinion of some who are competent

to know), into which they have read much more than is really to be found there. Also, terms taken from Christian theology have, of necessity, a much fuller meaning to the minds of Christian people who read them than is to be found in the vernacular expression which they represent. Short extracts, given without the context, are proverbially misleading, according to the individual bias of the extractor, either favourable or the reverse.

Kindly advisers have been urging lately that missionaries should try and discover what is good in Hinduism, and on that foundation gradually build up the truths of Christianity. It would be just as reasonable to expect to draw sweet water from a bitter spring. The old teachers of Christianity in India preached it as a matter of life and death, as indeed it is, and they made converts from amongst the educated men. A Brahmin convert has told me that what impelled him to carry his convictions to their proper conclusion was the belief that if he held back he would be lost.

The apologetic way in which Christianity is sometimes preached at the present day in India, in response to these well-meant but dangerous promptings, may possibly lead to the disastrous result of the incorporation of a kind of false Christ into Hinduism. Our Lord is greatly admired by a large number of intelligent Hindus. The Bible is often quoted by public speakers to illustrate

some point in their speech; not always, of course, with accuracy or appropriateness. Now and then a Hindu will say that he is a Christian in heart; and that being so, he pleads to be dispensed from the inconvenient ceremonial of baptism, which would separate him from his own people. The laxity of many Nonconformists, and some others, concerning baptism, gives him some ground for making this petition.

To take a measure of Christian morality into Hinduism, to place the Bible alongside their other sacred books, and to worship Christ along with Krishna, would satisfy modern Hindu aspirations without entailing much practical inconvenience.

In trying to describe everyday life in India, we shall at every turn meet with instances of the effect that Hinduism has in warping and marring natures which otherwise have so much which is attractive. But the sole purpose of this book is to try and depict Hindu India as it really is. People will only be stimulated to pray and work for the country with the energy and fullness of purpose which the case demands, when they have realised that the matter is vital and urgent. People will understand how greatly Christian Indians need the prayers of others when they realise that they have to lead their lives in the midst of evil, inconceivably great, and with the weight of inherited tendencies of wrong hindering their efforts to do right. Nor will charitable persons be forgetful to pray for those who have to

try and shepherd these sheep and lambs, whilst they themselves have to live in the midst of an atmosphere of evil influences, such as those who live in Christian countries know little of.

It is satisfactory and significant to note that one of the most pronounced of the agitators in favour of teaching Christianity through Hinduism has become one of the most determined and persuasive preachers of pure Christianity, with a corresponding increase of far-reaching and productive influence.

The following definitions of what is Hinduism from certain leading and representative Hindus will be of interest as showing that what has been said of its nebulous nature is not an exaggeration. The editor of an Indian paper called the *Leader*, asked the following question:—"What are the beliefs and practices indispensable in one professing the Hindu faith, as distinguished from what may be called non-essentials, which it is left to one's option to believe and to adopt?"

Some of the answers were quoted in the *Delhi Mission News*, vol. iv., p. 108, from which the following extracts are taken. They are slightly abridged, but the original sense has been carefully preserved.

Sir Guru Das Banerjee, an orthodox Hindu of Bengal, of great ability and eminence, says:—"Owing to the highly tolerant character of Hinduism and to the great diversity of opinion on the point, it is not easy to answer the question with

any great degree of definiteness. I think that the beliefs that are generally considered indispensable in a Hindu are: Belief in God, in a future state, and in the authority of the Vedas. The practices that are generally considered indispensable are: The rules prohibiting marriage in a different caste; forbidding dining with a person of an inferior caste; and the rule relating to forbidden food, especially beef. But courts of justice have gone much further, and held dissenting sects which have sprung out of the Hindu community, such as the Sikhs, to be Hindus, although they do not believe in the authority of the Vedas and do not observe any distinction of caste. And Hindu society now practically admits within its pale all persons who are Hindu by birth, whatever their beliefs and practices may be, provided they have not openly abjured Hinduism or married outside of Hindu society."

Mr Satyendra Nath Tagore, another Bengali Hindu, whose family is among the most distinguished in India, writes:—"There are no dogmas in Hinduism. You may believe in any doctrine you choose, even in atheism, without ceasing to be a Hindu. You, as a Hindu, must in theory accept the Vedas as the revealed religion, but you may put your own interpretation on the Vedic texts. This leaves a loophole for you to escape from the thraldom of dogmatism. It is the adherence to certain practices — rites and ceremonies — that Hinduism imperatively demands. Chief of these

is the system of caste as at present constituted, the slightest deviation from which cuts one off from the community. In determining the question proposed, the text is, What is it that entails excommunication of a Hindu? Surely not any specific article of belief, but a deviation from established usages and customs—such, for instance, as the remarriage of widows, etc. Again, non-observance of the prevailing modes of worship, non-observance of idol worship, especially on ceremonial occasions, might entail serious consequences. It is true that certain articles of belief obtain among the large body of Hindus, but they are by no means universal or essential to Hinduism. You may renounce the belief, provided you conform to the ceremony which is the outcome of such belief. For instance, it will not do to discountenance the practice of making funeral offerings to deceased ancestors, although you have no faith in the immortality of the soul."

Mr P. T. Srinivas Iyengar is principal of a college in Vizagapatam. He writes:—"The evolution of religion in India has not provided the Hindus with any belief or practice common to all who now go by that name. The pre-Aryan tribes had their own religious beliefs and practices, on which were superimposed those of the Aryans. The Vedic age, the post-Vedic times, the Buddhist age, and the age of the Paranas, have each contributed innumerable ideas and customs. The religion of each one of us contains relics of all

these strata, but not one of these can be called essential to the Hindu religion, because every belief or practice that is considered absolutely necessary by Hindus of one corner of India is unknown or ignored by some other corner. It is true that the various schools of Hindu philosophy agree in regarding a few fundamental ideas as axiomatic, but philosophy is not religion. The Mohammedans are one because they have a common religion and a common law. The Christians are one, because at least one point of faith is common. But the Hindus have neither faith, nor practice, nor law to distinguish them from others. I should therefore define a Hindu to be one born in India, whose parents so far as people can remember were not foreigners, or did not profess a foreign religion like Mohammedanism or Christianity, and who himself has not embraced such religions."

The last answer, which reads the vaguest of any, is from Mr T. Sadasivier, who is a Sessions Judge of Ganjam. He writes as follows:—"One professing the Hindu faith has only to have the following belief, namely, that the four Vedas contain moral and spiritual truth, which are not less valid than any other spoken or written words. He might believe in other spoken or written words (like the Bhagavad-gita) as of equal authority with the Vedas, but he ought not, if he is a Hindu, to believe such to be *superior*, so far as moral and religious truth is concerned. Out-castes are Hindus

so long as they believe the Vedas to contain the highest moral and religious truths. As regards practices, a Hindu ought to follow those he believes to be in conformity with and not opposed to, the Vedas. He can follow his own conscience and desires in ordinary matters, so long as he believes that they are not opposed to the Vedas. Human nature being liable to sin, even if he contravenes the practices believed by him to be Vedic, if he admits he *ought* to follow only practices enjoined by the Vedas, he is a Hindu, even if he cannot study and read the Vedas. If he believes that the Vedas inculcate certain practices for him and that he ought to follow them, he is and remains a Hindu."

CHAPTER II

INDIAN HOSPITALITY

Hospitality limited by caste rules. Feasts. The Hindu's guest-house. Laws of hospitality; observed by Indian Christians; their generosity to each other. Indian respect for the mother; retained through life; observed by Indian Christians. Swithun's mother. Indian affection shallow, except for the mother.

THE peoples of the East are proverbial for their hospitality, and certainly Indians in all parts of their country are true to this excellent tradition, although the caste system of Hindus, which in so many ways hinders their good purposes from producing their legitimate result, restricts their hospitable efforts, within their own dwelling, to the sometimes narrow limits of their own particular caste. Invitations to members of castes above their own would not be accepted. And if, in some cases, a broad-minded Hindu would be not unwilling to invite to dinner a friend belonging to a caste lower than his own, his good intentions would be almost certainly checkmated by the ladies of his household, who would refuse to cook for the intruder.

Rich men give feasts out of doors to a variety

of people, who sit in groups according to their caste. Even lepers and beggars are not unfrequently fed in this fashion on a large scale by those who are wealthy. Such feasts, however, do not come exactly under the laws of hospitality, because they are held according to the fancy of the giver. It is practically a matter of obligation to feast people bountifully in connection with marriages and deaths and some other ceremonies.

Any actual breach of the Indian code of hospitality is regarded as a serious lapse, and even within the limits of the family and caste, the burden of hospitality can become a very heavy one. A well-to-do Hindu in Poona city built a new three-storied house in a corner of his large compound. As he had already got a house of apparently ample dimensions, I asked him what was the object of this new one. He said that it was for his guests; and he then proceeded to give me a good deal of information concerning Hindu customs connected with hospitality.

He said that guests who come to stay usually arrive without invitation, or previous notice. They are often attended by wife and children and other relations, and remain for an indefinite time. A visit of even two or three months' duration is quite usual. I asked if it was not possible to hint that it was time that the visit came to a close. But he said that to do so would be considered very rude, and a great breach of hospitality, and that it was never done. People who are not

well off, often pay these long visits for the sake of the free rations; and, on account of their poverty, it is impossible to pay them back in their own coin by going to stay a corresponding time with them.

Indian Christians retain strongly these national ideas concerning the laws of hospitality, and are generous in their entertainment of each other, even although it means that their monthly supply of grain will run short, and that they will be hard put to it, and have to live on short commons during the last days of the month. People holiday-making, or out of work, will forage about in search of free meals, and will drop in here and there just about dinner time without much thought as to whether their company is welcome or not. Even the poorest persons will cheerfully produce all that they have got in order to feed these chance comers, with whom perhaps they have only a slight acquaintance. Christians are also generous with their money in helping other Christians who are in difficulties, or out of work. Some who may have got good appointments are, nevertheless, often kept poor by their efforts to help relations who, on their part, seem to have no delicacy about making urgent demands for assistance. Even mothers will prey without compunction on married children who can ill afford to render help.

But the petition of the mother is never rejected. In Hindu family life the respect and affection which the son has for his mother is a most

touching and beautiful characteristic, which only intensifies the older he grows. The Indian boy is often wilful and disobedient and rude to his mother, but he makes up for this by his dutiful conduct when he grows to manhood. It is almost comical to find Hindus of mature years referring everything to their mother, and even in small matters of daily life saying that they must ask their mother before they can do this or that. This filial conduct does not arise from fear of the maternal wrath, but because of the son's deep respect for his mother as such.

Many a Hindu has said to me, when discussing the possibility of acceptance of Christianity, "It would grieve my mother, and I cannot do that." When conversions have taken place, the final and most bitter struggle has nearly always been when the lamentations and entreaties of the mother had to be faced, and some men have not been able to stand this pressure, and have turned back on that ground alone. The tears of the wife are of small account compared with the distress of the mother.

It must be added that the Hindu mother appears to accept the considerate regard of her sons very much as a matter of course, and that if she looks upon them with equal affection, her manner of displaying it is, at any rate, different from the English ideal.

Happily Christian boys and men retain much of the same reverential feeling concerning their mother. The Indian equivalent of the English

parish clerk at the village church at Yerandawana was about to be married in Bombay, where his bride resided, 120 miles away. His mother was a curious, cross-grained old woman, not yet a Christian. As he had not much money, I suggested that there was no need to take his mother to this distant city for the wedding, but that she could be ready to greet the bride at their new home in the village when they returned.

But Swithun assured me that it was absolutely essential that his mother should go with him, and that if he was married without taking care to secure her presence, he would be for ever branded as an undutiful son. She was not at all grateful for his kind consideration, and made herself very disagreeable all through the wedding-day, but the guests treated her with a good deal of respect and regard solely on the score of her being the bridegroom's mother, and on that account a person to be honoured.

Indian affection is quite real as far as it goes, but it does not go very deep, so that it does not long outlive the removal of the object of regard, either through death or any other cause. Nor will Indian affection bear much strain. Petty complications in family life, trivial misunderstandings between friends of long standing, or amongst Christians some little hitch with the authorities of a mission, will sometimes result in life-long separations or bitter animosity between those who, for the time being, were objects of real, but shallow,

affection. But the Indian puts up with anything rather than quarrel with his mother, and her memory remains fresh and green long after other departed relations and friends have been lost in oblivion.

SWITHUN'S "NEW HOME IN THE VILLAGE."

[*To face p.* 16.

CHAPTER III

THE INDIAN VIEW OF NATURE AND ARCHITECTURE

Indians oblivious to scenery. The beauties of Nature. Results of learning drawing. Hindus' offerings of flowers; their garlands. Pictures of flowers. The new village church attracts; impressed by its interior; schoolboys visit it. Visitors from the Hindu college. A party from the Widows' Home. Brahmin ladies admire the embroidery. The "religious bath."

ALMOST all Indians are apparently oblivious to beautiful scenery. You rarely see them looking at a gorgeous sunset, or hear them speak about it. You will seldom hear them make any reference to the beauty or otherwise of their surroundings. As they travel along the road you will not see them looking round about them. Some passengers gaze listlessly out of the windows of the train, but to all appearance without much interest, except at stations where there is a crowd on the platform. Even the buildings or shop windows of a city only attract a languid amount of attention; but a street quarrel, or a war of words between two excited females, will soon draw a large crowd.

The brightness of the moon and the glory of the stars, astonishingly brilliant as they are when

seen through the clear Indian atmosphere, does not seem to excite admiration, in spite of the divine attributes which Hindus ascribe to such objects. Even ordinary secular education does not do much to stimulate appreciation of the beauties in Nature. Christianity does something in this direction by extending the range of mental vision to the possibilities of the heavenly country, and the knowledge of God as the Creator excites a measure of interest in the objects of His creation. But even amongst Indian Christians any keen perception of the beauty of scenery by land or on the sea-coast is defective.

Drawing is a subject which is now extensively taught in schools in India, and it is a branch of education which is helping to train the Indian mind to observe and appreciate form and colour. At one time the many lads who came to the Mission-house for old Christmas cards scornfully rejected even the most beautiful pictures of flowers as being of no worth. Pictures of birds, or beasts, or people they sought for eagerly, because such objects came within their range of appreciation, but the beauty of a flower as such they did not understand.

Loose flowers without stalk or leaves are offered in temples, or they are strung on a thread and hung on the god like a necklace. But the value of the offering is in the scent of the flower, and not in the beauty of its colour or form. The Yerandawana village children often come to the church with their

cap or pocket filled with flowers plucked in this fashion, which they present as an offering. We have a large brass bowl in which we receive such gifts, which is then placed on the altar, with the prayer that those who have thus shown their goodwill may be led on to give their own hearts to God.

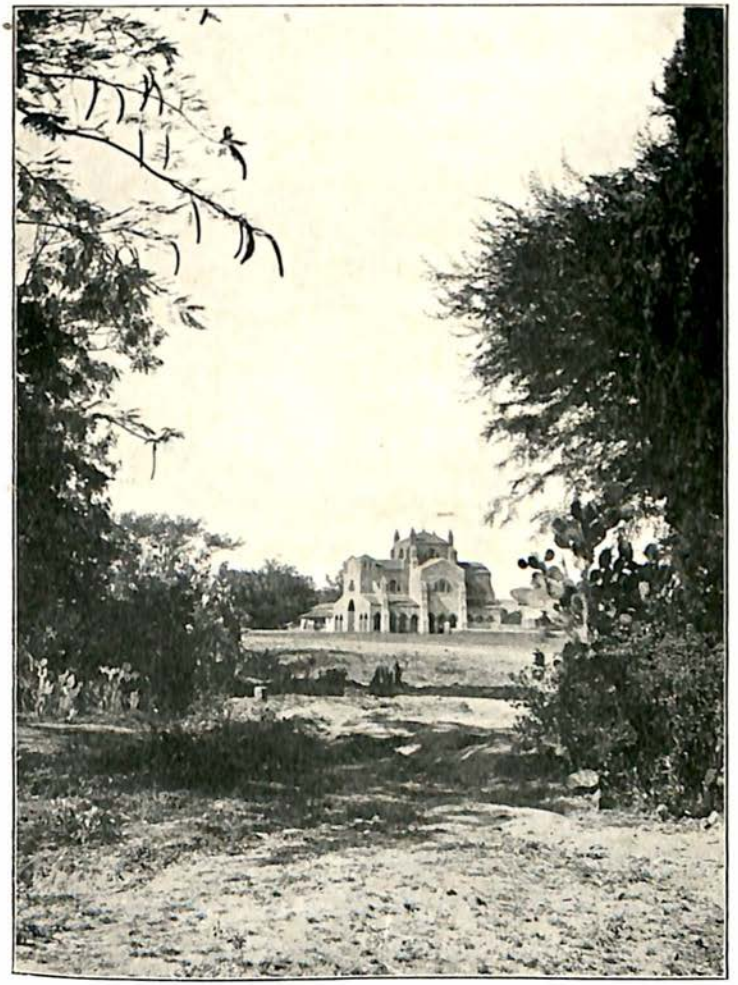
The elaborate garlands which are used so largely as a complimentary gift to those whom it is thought desirable to honour are also valued for their scent rather than for any intrinsic beauty which they may possess. If the flowers happen to be defective in this respect the defect is corrected by the addition amongst their petals of powerfully smelling attar of roses. So little is the natural beauty of the flower recognised that in the more elaborate garlands small round looking-glasses in tawdry brass frames are strung at intervals, producing a painful incongruity.

But of late years quite a number of the more advanced students have called at the Mission-house expressly seeking pictures of flowers as drawing studies, and their discriminating remarks, and their admiration of pictures of special beauty, and the excellence of some of their own efforts in the production of drawings of natural objects, shows that at anyrate this department of education is bringing about the desired results.

When the church at Yerandawana was building, the first indication that its unusual design commended itself to the Indian mind was that passers-by began to stop and look at it. You need to be familiar with the Indian's state of oblivion concern-

ing his surroundings, already referred to, in order to understand the force of this. To pause and gaze at a big building in process of erection is, with most people, a natural and obvious thing to do; especially if time is of no object and the design of the building a novelty. But not so the Indian. To gradually slacken his pace, to turn and look, to pause and discuss, was an indication that new and unwonted impressions were being made on the Indian mind. The effect increased as the building approached completion. Few people passed without regarding it attentively. Many looked back to take another view before they had got out of sight. And although, to the villagers at anyrate, the church is now a familiar object, many of them still seem to find a pleasure in looking up at it as they go by.

Its interior never fails to impress Hindus of whatever age or station, and it has become a valuable agent in the work of pioneer evangelisation. People who enter the church in an easygoing way are impelled to reverence and subdued tones at the sight of its domes, and the many arches in the massive walls, combined with its extreme simplicity. Controversial Hindus drop their controversy, and find themselves uttering expressions of surprised pleasure. Young children are so attracted by the church that they ask to visit it again and again. Often when a Hindu boy comes and asks for pictures for the first time, some of the old stagers will suggest that he must see the



YERANDAWANA CHURCH FROM A DISTANCE.

[*To face p.* 20.

church, and they are eager to display their knowledge of our religious ways by explaining to him the meaning of what he finds there.

The English stories which are given as text-books in the upper classes of Indian schools sometimes present great difficulties to the Hindu masters, who have to explain the meaning of words and phrases. Miss Yonge's *Little Duke* was being read in some of the Poona City High Schools one year. Even the Christian and surname of the author, pronounced with exact reference to the spelling, produced such a mysterious result that it was some time before I recognised the real name buried up in strange sounds. Miss Yonge's references to churches were often particularly perplexing, and a boy asking what was meant by "the chancel," his master wisely advised his pupil to pay a visit to a Christian church and see for himself. Quite a number of young students at this period came and asked to be shown over the church, and to have its various parts explained to them. Some of the questions were not easy to answer, considering that the questioners were Hindus. What is meant by "Holy Communion?" asked one of these young men. And later on another, having had the font explained to him, said, "And how about the ceremony of bread and wine?"

Even a little party of seven or eight female students from a Hindu college, escorted by the one Christian girl in the establishment, came to see the church. Some of them were carefully dressed with

due regard to Hindu fashion, but one or two were advanced women of the modern school, who had introduced several innovations, especially as regards a freer way of arranging the hair. There was something almost pathetic in their interest in what they saw, because the hope of their ever being otherwise than outsiders was, to say the least of it, very distant. It was, however, a distinct mark of progress that the Christian girl who brought them was not only tolerated as a boarder in the college amongst high-caste girls, but she was evidently popular and looked up to.

About a dozen Hindu widows came over one morning to see the church from their home in the next village. They displayed a curious combination of curiosity, apprehension, and interest. One oldish widow literally fled to the other side of the church when she suddenly realised that I was standing behind her. The other women were a good deal amused at her alarm. It was evident that everything that they saw was an enigma to them. Naturally Hindu visitors constantly ask, "Where is the God?" and they are a good deal astonished to find that there is no visible God. The widows were naturally interested in the needlework of the altar cloths and hangings, and asked several questions about it and admired it. Like the lady visitors from the Hindu college, they showed some diversity of taste and opinion in their dress and ornaments and arrangement of hair.

When plague was bad in Poona City many of the well-to-do people left their homes and camped round about Yerandawana. In the evening, when Brahmin ladies were taking a walk with their children, or returning from their daily visit to the Hindu temple in the village, a party of them would now and then come into the church and study it at leisure with great interest. The beautiful figure of the Crucifixion, with Our Lady and St John, above the high altar, worked in silk and gold, they looked at and discussed with much appreciation of the skilled needlework and the richness of the materials. How far the picture itself appealed to them it was difficult to say. Finally, they would gather round the great font, sometimes with caution till they saw that there was no water in it, and listened respectfully to the description of its use.

"Yes, I see, it is for a religious bath," said one of them; and we wondered how long it might be before some of these good women would again gather round the font to receive their own baptism.

CHAPTER IV

INDIAN EMPLOYERS OF LABOUR

Studies of Indian character. Workpeople rude to their employers. Disobedience of female workers. The contractor's pay-day. The labourers cheated. The caretaker of the woodstore; the risk of fire; the caretaker's fidelity; his cheerful poverty; the tyranny of clothes; his prayers. The wood-cutters defrauded.

WHILE the village church was in process of building, many valuable opportunities occurred for getting insight into Indian character. Various grades of men were employed, from the rough coolies who dug the foundations, to the skilled decorator who gilded the cross on the top of the tower. The prosperous Hindu contractor with his clerks and overseers were constantly on the spot, and vendors of wood and stone and other materials were frequently in the compound making bargains about fresh supplies.

One noticeable feature amongst the working people was their rude manner towards their employers. An English master would not have put up with it for an hour, but it did not disturb the Indian contractor in the least, and it was clearly only the normal state of things. Men and

women of all grades joked with their employers, laughed at them, made game of them, and when angry abused them to their heart's content. They on their part either took no notice, or laughed, or abused them in return. Their masters did not resent even deliberate disobedience. An Englishman generally expects to be obeyed at once, and hesitation or delay on the part of the subject is looked upon as a serious offence. But it is not customary for any Indian to obey an order on the instant. You must always give him a little time.

The contractor's son, who acted as ganger or overseer, would find a bricklayer's assistant, male or female, sitting in the shade doing nothing. Women are employed largely as day-labourers, and more often than not it was the woman who was the slowest to obey. The overseer would tell her peremptorily to get up and go to work. The woman would pretend not to hear him. The command would be repeated in louder tones. The woman would continue to wear an air of supreme indifference, and would remain sitting. Rougher words, accompanied by threats, would at last produce the response, "All right! I am coming," but without any movement on the part of the woman. She would at length leisurely resume work. The contractor appeared to be content with this scant measure of obedience and not to expect more.

But when it came to wages day he was able to pay off old scores, but not in coin of the realm.

Almost everybody in India is paid monthly. When a person says, "My pay is fifteen rupees," he means that this is what he gets each month. But the contractor settled accounts when he felt inclined, and at irregular intervals. Pay-day was a very stormy one. Its advent was notified by the arrival of the money-box, much resembling the old-fashioned wooden desk of the last century. The contractor sat on the ground on a bit of old carpet, under the shade of a grass-mat, with the box before him. The process of paying often went on for some hours, because it was accompanied by much fierce arguing and angry debate. The contractor, though taking large contracts, could neither read nor write. Yet he was said to have his complicated accounts clearly registered in his own mind. He occasionally made a few mystic symbols to assist his memory, which no one understood except himself. One of his sons, who was better educated than he was, kept a record of what the labourers did, and it was from this record that their pay was calculated.

A slight familiarity with the nature of Hindu business transactions would lead to the conviction that the vehement protestations of many of the labourers concerning the injustice of this record were well founded. The contractor was bent on paying no more than he was absolutely obliged. Considerations concerning justice, which still have some influence even amongst indifferent Christians, would not have entered his mind at all. His only

anxiety would have been lest his men should be exasperated to the point of leaving him. Hence the workmen probably generally came out worst in the conflict because they had no other means of redress, and labour is in most places abundant in India, and vacant posts are quickly filled. The contractor, on pay-day at least, was able to show his contempt for the underlings who were so often rude to him, by the way in which he gave them their money. Tossing it to them from a distance, they had to gather it up as best they could out of the dust into which he threw it.

It is sometimes suggested that the want of truth and honesty in business affairs amongst Hindus has been exaggerated. But it would be scarcely possible to exaggerate the extent of what is almost universal. If you were to ask one of themselves whether he knew of any Hindu who could be really trusted in any matter involving money, he would at once reply that he did not know of anybody. The day-labourer in particular, being a defenceless mortal, rarely gets from anybody the full sum to which he is entitled. If he is paid by the day, bearing this in mind, he retaliates by doing as little work as possible. Hence labourers are almost always paid by the job.

A Hindu wood-merchant took a contract for clearing a large tract of forest land some miles beyond the Yerandawana settlement. The quantity of wood was so great that there was no room for it in his yard in Poona City, and so he

rented a strip of land immediately opposite the Mission bungalow as a temporary wood-store. This vast amount of dry timber became a matter of some anxiety, because if it had caught fire it would have roasted us out of church and home. Nor was this fear altogether unfounded. An old man was appointed caretaker, and lived in a frail hut in the midst of the wood. He cooked his dinner daily with the help of a wild-looking, unclothed little daughter who shared his humble home. They generally kindled their fire inside the hut, which was made of most inflammable materials, and to judge by the clouds of smoke which poured out through the coarse thatch at cooking time, the operations were on rather a large scale. He also made a large bonfire of refuse bits of wood outside his hut on cold nights, and there he and a few friends would sit and toast themselves till a late hour.

This man was supposed to be paid by the month, but he told me that his money was always doled out to him in small sums at irregular intervals, and that he was never paid up to date. This is a common custom to secure continuity of service. It would not matter if the balance due was really given at the conclusion of the compact. But this is rarely, if ever, done.

The old man watched the wood with exemplary fidelity for two years, never absent from his post night or day, except for the briefest possible visit to the bazaar at long intervals, to buy the few

necessities of his simple life. He then fell ill, and decided to give up his job and return to his native village. But his employer only gave him a portion of the final balance, on the plea that he must have neglected his duty when he was unwell. He asked me to write a certificate to the effect that he had stuck to his post all the time, which I gladly did, but it was not likely to help his cause with his heathen master.

This cheerful old man was an example of how happiness does not depend on comfortable surroundings. The hut, which was of his own manufacture, was of the most miserable description. Inside there was literally only just space enough for himself and his little girl to creep in and lie down. In the monsoon it was reduced to a pitiable condition, the rain coming through like a sieve. The floor having become mud, the old man was at last obliged to invest in a native bedstead, which only costs about 8d. Having secured this luxury he was quite content, and when he looked across at the Mission bungalow, which, though homely enough, was a palace compared to his hut, I do not suppose that he ever felt any wish to exchange residences.

The only thing that he could not bear was the tyranny of clothes, and he wore even less than is usual in India. His chief joy was to sit and bake in the morning sun, and to be coiled up in the shade during the hottest part of the day. Now and then he came over and sat in

one of our verandahs for a little while, and he would wander into church and gaze round with admiration. He was always smiling, or laughing, or talking, or working, or sleeping. Though quite ignorant, he was a devout Hindu according to his lights. It was pathetic to hear him in his hut calling loudly on his gods, just about the time we went to Compline. He always repeated the names of about half a dozen gods, calling on each about twelve times or more in succession, in a rapid but clear voice which could be distinctly heard in the bungalow. I do not think that he ever missed his evening exercise. We tried to teach him something of Christianity; but beyond sharing in the general appreciation of the fabric of the church, and feeling that Christians made good neighbours, I do not suppose that he took anything in. Pictures he did not understand, or when we showed them to him, laughed merrily, thinking that we meant it for a joke.

After the wood had lain there for a long time, but before the old man retired, men were sent to cut it up for firewood. Half a dozen men worked hard for two or three weeks, and sawed and split quite a mountain of logs. Their day's work they measured in a primitive sort of balance, and the tally was checked by the old caretaker. Once or twice an agent from the wood-merchant came on the scene, and a war of words always ensued on the subject of methods of weighing,

and the prospective payment of results. This was preparing the way for the final scene when the men began to clamour for their money. The agent declared that the wood had not been correctly weighed and that it must be measured afresh, a process which would have taken some days. Meanwhile he said he would give them a portion of what was due, and the balance must stand over. The men on receiving their docked pay indignantly gathered up their tools and declared that they would return to their native village, which they did. The agent had no doubt counted on this final result all the time, and was able to report to his master how well he had served his interests.

The wood had no permanent guardian after the old man left. Other men came from time to time, worked for a day or two, cut up a certain amount of wood, and then threw up the job before they had been paid anything at all, and thus the wood-merchant got a good deal of work done for nothing. These are the sort of conditions under which nearly all the poorer class of day-labourers in India have to labour.

CHAPTER V

THE INDIAN POSTAL SERVICE

The post-runners; their fidelity. The village post. Letters to rustics few. Popularity of post cards. Indian train-sorters. Dishonesty. Insurance. Postal privileges. Use of the telegraph; its abuse; absurd instance of this. The postman a privileged visitor.

THE excellence of the postal service in India is surprising considering the difficult conditions under which it is worked. The men engaged in the collection and delivery of letters are perhaps more of a success than those who are employed within the post offices. These latter have more temptations to dishonesty.

The lowest grade of all in the service is proverbially the most dependable. These are the "post-runners," who are illiterate men who collect letters but cannot deliver them, because they cannot read the addresses. They often have very long beats in remote country districts, where sometimes there is risk both from robbers and wild beasts. The runner may be recognised by a sort of javelin which he carries, presumably for his protection; and to this are attached some jingling bits of iron or small bells, so that after dark you can detect

the post-runner by this sound. More often than not his long journey extends into the night. Considering the lonely tracks through which his road frequently leads, it is to the credit of the inhabitants of the country that he is not often robbed. It is also to his own credit that he is said to run any risk rather than fail to deliver his mail-bag at its destination. His appearance, as he ambles along in shabby attire with his letter-bag over his shoulder, is not calculated to inspire confidence. But the Yerandawana letters are picked up in the evening by one of these primitive post-runners, and no instance is on record of any letter failing to reach its destination.

Post offices are at present only to be found in a few of the more important villages. The post-master is generally the Government schoolmaster, who is grateful for any addition to his small income. In thousands of Indian villages letters are only delivered two or three times a week, or even less, and they have no post-box. People send their letter to the post when anybody happens to be going to the nearest town.

When the Mission first settled in Yerandawana there was no collection of letters at all. The English mail letters, which reached Bombay on Friday, sometimes did not get to Yerandawana till the following Wednesday. But the postal authorities readily grant facilities as soon as there is a reasonable demand for them, and there is now a daily delivery; also a morning and evening

collection from a post-box hung in the verandah of the Mission roadside dispensary.

Villagers at present make so little use of the postal service that greater facilities than they have already got are not yet required. Few rustics can write with sufficient ease to enable them to write a letter, and a considerable proportion of the few letters which come to our villagers are soon brought on to the Mission-house, or to the schoolmaster, because the recipients cannot read them for themselves.

Almost all Indian correspondence is carried on by means of post cards. It is the only country, perhaps, in which the post card may be said to be a real success. In India it exactly supplied a want. The card is cheap (it only costs ½d.), and it is complete in itself. Stamps and envelopes have to be wetted. The gum may have been made of the hoofs or bones of the cow, and the thought of possible defilement of caste comes in. The post card has no drawback. Its publicity, which makes English people dislike it, is not considered a disadvantage by the Indian. He reads other people's letters as a matter of course, and expects other people to read his. I have often seen a postman seated by the street side sorting out his post cards, surrounded by an interested little crowd. He and they are reading as many of the post cards as there is time for, and no one appears conscious of irregularity in the proceeding.

A post-office inspector who was travelling in

the train with me told me that they have great difficulty in checking robberies committed by the Indian train-sorters, because effective supervision is impossible. In the interval between station and station, which in some of the mail trains is often an hour or two, the sorters know that they are secure from interruption. They get skilled in detecting by the feel the presence of a bank-note within an envelope. In a country where paper currency is largely in vogue people often send money by post in the form of notes in unregistered letters, trusting to the thin note not being observed.

Many such notes get stolen by the train-sorters. Even sending half notes is not always a security, if the remitter does not take the precaution of waiting to hear of the safe arrival of the first half. The dishonest sorter having secured the first half, and having observed the post-mark and hand-writing, will be on the look-out for the other half, which he knows is likely to come along the same route in a day or so. The only chance of getting hold of the thief is by setting a trap for him in the shape of a marked note or coin. But the Indian thief often suspects and avoids the trap. Inspectors board the train at unexpected stations, and travel for a while with the sorters, and look into their affairs; but the sorters are generally ready for them, and no sign of irregularity is visible. Nevertheless a certain percentage of thefts are brought to light, and the delinquents

sent to prison. Insurance of articles sent by post is a great safeguard, as is shown by the fact that in one year recently the total insured value of articles posted amounted to nearly £17,000,000, whereas the sum paid in compensation was only about £500.

There are postal privileges in India such as England knows nothing of. Not only is there the ¼d. post card, but there is an inland ½d. postage, for letters not exceeding ½ oz. in weight. The value of a money order is brought in cash by the postman and paid into your hand, and the receipt that you sign is returned by the post office to the sender, and there is no possibility of your being defrauded, because, if the money goes wrong on its way to you, the post office is responsible.

Another great convenience is what is commonly spoken of as V.P.P.—that is to say, the "value payable parcel" system. If you order something from a shop to be sent by post, the postman collects the value of the parcel before he hands it over, and the post office transmits the money to the sender. If the person to whom the package is sent refuses to pay, or if he cannot be found, the package goes back to the sender. If the goods are heavy and are forwarded by train, the railway invoice is sent by post, but it is not handed over by the postman until he has received the value of the goods. An immense amount of trouble and correspondence is saved by this system, and it is a great security to shopkeepers in a country

where distances are great, and many customers unknown, or migratory, or living in out-of-the-way places.

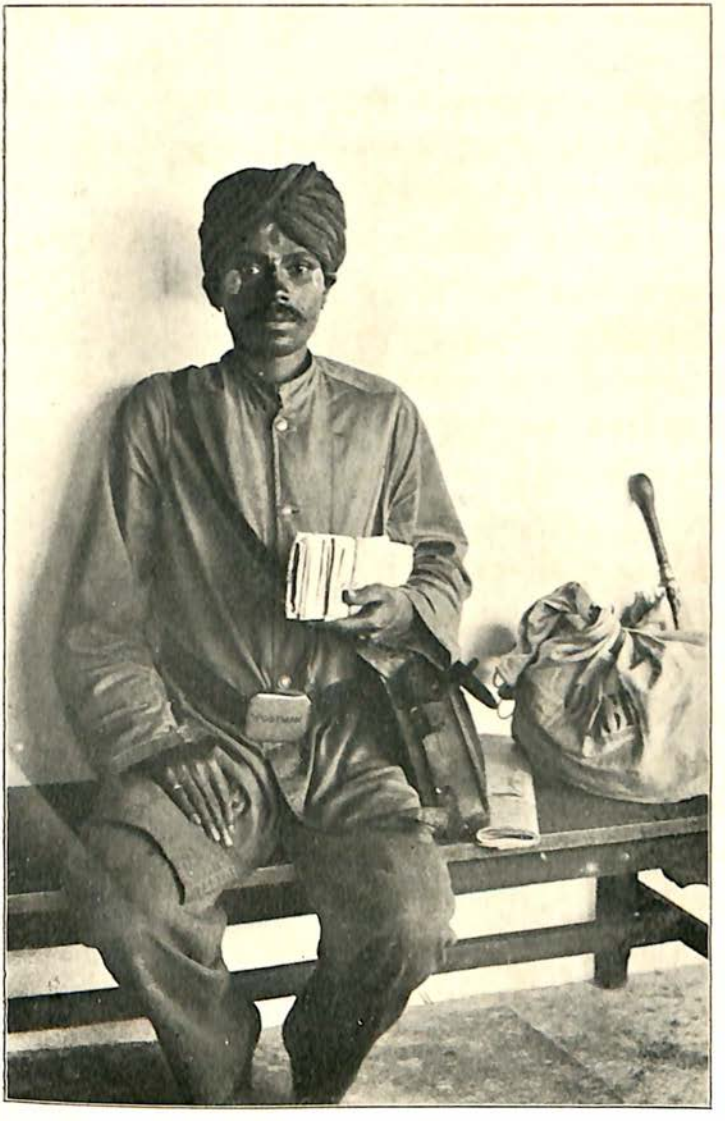
The telegraph has become rather popular amongst Indians, and they are inclined to use it on trivial occasions. As telegrams have to be transmitted in English, I am familiar with the nature of those sent to rustic Indians, because those that come to Yerandawana always find their way to the Mission bungalow to be interpreted. Amongst the more well-to-do Indians a death is now almost always announced by telegraph. It is a new and impressive way of showing respect to the deceased, and makes it appear that he was in his lifetime an important person. In cases of sickness telegrams are despatched here and there to relations, summoning them urgently and at once, before there has been time to ascertain whether the sickness is really serious or not. Relations hurry off from long distances at great expense (how they get the money is in some cases a mystery), and arrive perhaps to find the sick person walking about. Christians under similar circumstances act with just as much hasty precipitation as other Indians.

A most absurd instance of the abuse of the use of the telegraph happened to one of our Christian women. She got a telegram to the effect that her son was going to be hanged on the following Thursday, and that she must come at once. The woman brought the telegram to the

Mission-house in the utmost consternation and distress. The son being rather a "ne'er-do-weel," his having got into some scrape was not improbable; but that he should have committed murder, and been tried and sentenced without anybody hearing of it seemed impossible. A telegram was sent to the governor of the gaol where the lad was supposed to be. A reply was promptly returned saying that there was no prisoner of that name in the gaol. The whole thing proved to be an absurd attempt on the part of the lad himself to get his mother to come to the place where he was living. To have merely telegraphed that he was ill might not have had the desired effect, but the appalling contents of the false telegram he thought were bound to be effective. The inevitable distress of his mother he does not appear to have taken into account at all.

Telegrams are also used as a means of putting on the screw in case of a debt, or perhaps as a means of extorting money falsely. "Send Rs.20 at once"—"Bring Rs.5 without fail to-morrow"—such have been some of the village telegrams. The contents of a telegram soon become public property, because a small crowd always accompanies its recipient when he comes to have it read. They listen eagerly to its contents, discuss it at length, and retail it to all absentees.

The Indian postman knows that he is a privileged and generally welcome visitor, especially when he is the bearer of the bulky weekly mail



THE INDIAN VILLAGE POSTMAN.

(The white paint-marks on his forehead and cheeks indicate that Vishnu is his special god.)

[*To face p.* 38.

from England. He steps into the verandah, or in at any of the many wide-open doors of the bungalow, with a confidence and with a consciousness that there is no need to ask permission, such as other Indian visitors do not always feel.

CHAPTER VI

INDIANS AND ENGLISH CUSTOMS

Spread of English customs inevitable. No national dress. Christians and English dress. Increased refinement means increased expense; instances of this. Defects in the Indian style of dress. Beauty of the turban. Models in the Indian Institute. The transformed policeman.

"BUT why are they in English clothes? Why do they not wear their Indian dress?" So said somebody when looking at a photograph of some of the Christian lads who are working in the Mission stables.

The criticism is sometimes heard that missionaries are largely responsible for the introduction of European dress and customs into foreign countries. The charge is only partially true; in many cases it is the restraining influence of the missionary which has done something to check the inevitable growth of foreign customs, even at the cost of provoking some discontent amongst the members of his flock.

The real truth of the matter is that the spread of these customs is a tide that cannot be stayed, and the most that can be hoped for is to help to regulate it, so that things obviously out of place

should not creep in. As the knowledge of English spreads, the acquisition of English ways gradually follows. This naturally is specially the case amongst Christians, because so many of them are living in close touch with English people.

Indian Christians are sometimes criticised and laughed at for their frequent adoption of European dress, which often involves the adjuncts of collars, ties, studs, shoes, and socks. But in so doing they are not discarding a national dress, because India does not possess one. Dress in India denotes religion or occupation, not country. The ample linen cloth which the Hindu folds around his waist and therewith clothes his legs, denotes that he is a Hindu. For that reason many Christians do not care to retain it. The Mohammedans have their own special garb, which of course Christians could not adopt. The English being a Christian race, it has inevitably followed that their style of dress should in India become associated with the idea of Christianity, and few people except Christians wear it, except that coats of English cut are now common amongst all classes of Indians.

It is true that some missionaries who are anxious to retain Eastern customs as far as possible are nevertheless averse to the retention of native costume, because experience has taught them that it has serious disadvantages, and that it is wholesome for a Christian to be marked as such wherever he goes by what he wears. Added

to which, it is a well-known fact that an Indian lad, neatly clad in English style with all those adjuncts for which he is criticised, stands a much better chance of getting work, and at a higher rate of pay, than would be the case if he made his application dressed with equal neatness, but in native garments. His English dress also secures him many little concessions and courtesies, especially when travelling, which he would not otherwise get.

Christianity rightly brings in its train aspirations for some of the refinements of civilisation, and that these involve an increase of expenditure is inevitable. Indian Christians are sometimes reproached for their inability to live on the small sum on which a Hindu of the same station manages to exist. No doubt some, partly from inexperience, have followed Western ways to a foolish extent. But the fact remains that a good Christian has unavoidably more expenses than those of the average working Hindu. He cannot spend his evenings dozing in the dark, therefore he must have a lamp, with its usual adjuncts. He has been taught to read, and needs a few books. He now and then writes a letter. He reads his Bible with his family, and says some prayers before they go to bed. His wife can sew and mend her children's clothes, and the evening hours with the lamp are of value to her. He no longer cares to go about in the scant clothing which satisfies a Hindu. He would not wish his little children

NARAYEN KHILARI, SON OF ONE OF THE FARMERS IN THE VILLAGE.

[*To face p.* 42.

to run about naked, like those of his Hindu neighbours. He must have clean clothes for Sunday, and though he can do a little rough washing on his own account, he needs the skill of the *dhobie* for some of his wife's garments and his white Sunday suit. He is expected to contribute liberally towards church expenses; and where the number of Christians in a place is few, this burden falls rather heavily on each. Occasionally he needs a new prayer book or hymn book. He would like to take in a weekly paper. He has begun to understand a little what is meant by home life, and so he is tempted to buy pictures and other ornaments to make his house look pleasant. Without a clock he cannot make much progress in the practice of punctuality, and he buys one in order that he may get to church at the proper time. Greater regard for cleanliness means soap and towels. He can no longer have a share in the periodical Hindu feasts when poor people, at anyrate once in a way, get a full belly. On the contrary, the traditional spirit of hospitality, especially at the time of great festivals, is often a serious drain on the resources of many Christians, who, like most Indians, are generally generous beyond their means to all comers. The Indian Christian also desires to have his children educated, and though he gets a good deal of help from mission schools he does so less than formerly, and he is often told (and no doubt rightly) that if he wishes

education for his children he must pay for it like other people.

It would probably be considered almost a heresy even to suggest that the various styles of dress worn by Indian men are not really more picturesque than many other styles. A street in an Eastern city, with its throng of quaintly dressed people, is much more fascinating in appearance than the sombre hues of an average London crowd in the winter time. The rich colours and the sparkling jewels of an assembly of Indian nobility attract the eye by their brilliance. But if you separate the individuals who make up the crowd, and take their costume into individual consideration, you are conscious of defects. The glittering array of an Indian chief appears more adapted to feminine needs than those of a king or noble. The *dhota*, which takes the place of trousers amongst Hindus, is not really a particularly comely garment, and its loose folds are not at all convenient for working men, especially masons and carpenters, who have to climb about on scaffolds.

The dresses of Indian women in general may safely be accepted as being more picturesque and more convenient than the styles of female costume prevalent in Europe. And the turban for the men, with its variety of shape and colour, and its great practical utility as a protection from the rays of the tropical sun, is without doubt the most artistic covering for the head that the world

produces. It is a sad pity that the turban is being slowly but steadily ousted by the adoption of a stupid little cloth cap, as ugly as it is useless.

How hopeless it would be to attempt to decide which is the national dress out of any of those now worn in India, might be realised even in England by a visit to a museum, such as the Indian Institute in Oxford. There is there a most interesting collection of clay figures, admirably modelled, and coloured and draped. They represent many of the various types and dresses to be found in the country. These figures are made in Poona City, and are absolutely correct. They do not by any means include all the varieties of costume to be seen in India. Nevertheless, if you were to mix them all up together, the result would very fairly represent the motley throng which you might see in the more crowded parts of Bombay City, to which place, as a great seaport, people come from all parts of India. If you were to select a person out of the throng as wearing a dress suitable for Christians to adopt, you would be told that that particular costume denoted either the man's religion or his occupation, or both, and for anyone else to wear it, except those of the same class as himself, would create a false impression as to the wearer's identity. If you were to suggest that the costume selected might be adopted as the national dress for India, you would be assured that no one would consent

to wear it except the little group of people whose distinctive garb it is.

How much dress has to do with the appearance of an Indian was brought home to me one day, when a magnificent-looking policeman entered the carriage in which I was sitting, at a station near Bombay. He had on a tall blue turban, dark blue tunic with leathern belt, loose knickerbockers, and putties. His clothes were put on with extreme neatness; they were as spotless as those of a London policeman, and the brass numbers and letters polished to the highest degree. I was astonished to see this magnificent fellow rapidly divest himself of all his clothing—turban, tunic, knickerbockers, putties—there would have been nothing left, except that a Hindu wears beneath his uniform the meagre garments which suffice for everyday life, so that when he had got rid of everything which appertained to him as a policeman he was still fit to go into Indian society. The ordinary garments of an Indian are scanty, but the double set of clothing might be thought rather oppressive in the tropics. But the Indian likes to be warmly clad at any time of the year. Boys of the Mission will wear comforters and warm coats well into the hot season if allowed to do so.

The effect of the removal of the policeman's uniform was startling. He was evidently going off duty, because he handed all his discarded belongings to a friend on the platform, and he

was only using my carriage as a dressing-room. The whole process of transformation only took about two minutes, and he then walked off in the opposite direction. But no one could have supposed that there was any identity between the shabby Hindu, with shaved head and little pigtail and fluttering *dhota*, and that fine-looking fellow who first entered the carriage.

CHAPTER VII

INDIAN UNPUNCTUALITY

On the railway. The unpunctual neighbour. Indians' opinions concerning punctuality. Christianity only a partial cure. Servants and punctuality. Indians' unpunctuality at meals. Parable of the Marriage Feast. Patient waiting.

THE inveterate unpunctuality of almost all Indians is a serious obstacle to the progress of the country. Hours and days are wasted through their failure to keep appointments, or to do work at the proper time. The Indian takes long to understand, and never appreciates, the Englishman's craze for punctuality. Because the Englishman grumbles when the Indian is two hours late in keeping his appointment, the latter thinks that it is only part of the former's natural unreasonableness.

This Indian habit of unpunctuality would soon produce confusion and disaster on the railway. For this reason English station-masters at the principal stations, and English drivers and guards on most passenger trains are, at present, a necessity. Subordinates, working under English supervision, are obliged to hurry up. Parsees, who in many ways display great business capacity,

THE "KINDLY HINDU" NEIGHBOUR, HIS SONS AND GRANDCHILDREN.

[*To face p.* 48.

make reliable engine-drivers. But they are themselves only settlers in India.

It is difficult to get subordinate Indian railway officials to realise that minutes are of importance. Express trains, especially on some of the lines where the number of European officials is not great, are frequently held up through the carelessness of native station-masters at roadside stations. I remember an express having to wait more than ten minutes near a wretched little country station in the early morning, the driver whistling frantically before the slumbering master, who was the only station official, could be roused to lower the signal. When at last the train moved slowly past the station I saw this Indian official in process of being withered up by the scorching language of the English driver. But in spite of that, the probability is that he soon repeated the offence. Such carelessness involves the additional risk that it tempts drivers to run past signals, on the assumption that the signalman is asleep or inattentive to his duty.

A kindly Hindu offered to drive me in his carriage to the cantonment on some business matter. He suggested that we should start at seven the next morning, and he was a little disappointed because I said that I should not be free to start till 7.30. As the carriage had not appeared at that hour the next morning, I sent over to my neighbour to ask how soon he would be ready. He replied, "In a quarter of an hour."

He came over himself at 8.15 to say that there was a slight delay, but that we should very soon be off. He sat talking till 8.45, and then said he would go and expedite matters. He returned in about half an hour, and asked whether after all it might not be better if we went in the Mission *tonga*. But as that was not available, he said that it was of no consequence, because his own carriage would be ready almost directly. At about a quarter to ten I went over to see what our prospects were, and he then said that he thought we had better put off the expedition for that day, and make a really early start the next morning. He gave strict orders to his servant that the carriage should be ready without fail, and soon after 6 A.M. it actually appeared. But even then we did not get off till nearly nine. And this is only one instance of the delay and uncertainty and waste of time which occurs daily, and many times a day, in some phase or other, and is a necessary feature of all Indian affairs.

Talking to an intelligent young Hindu about this defect, I suggested that it might be partly due to the scarcity of clocks, and that when these became more numerous and better understood there might be some improvement. The young man replied: "Clocks and watches will make no difference; the defect is in the Indian nature."

"Then will this never be cured?" I asked.

"Probably never," he said.

"Never," I answered, "until Christianity teaches you the value of time."

Another Indian, quite independently, expressed the same idea in almost the same words. "Some of us have learnt to be punctual," he said, "in our engagements with English people because we find that they expect it of us. But we shall never be any different in this respect amongst ourselves. We do not think it any drawback to be two or three hours late."

Another Hindu, referring with approval to the punctuality and regularity of the services in the church, said, "We also have our fixed times for our observances. But the difference between us is that you keep them, and we don't."

It must be confessed that Christianity is only partially successful in curing the defect of unpunctuality. Both amongst priests and people, unless there happens to be some Englishman at hand with precise ideas about time, there is an extraordinary vagueness as to the hour for service, especially in country districts. Service begins when a sufficient number of people have arrived. The bell is very little guide, because when it has been rung and nobody comes, it is rung again. A few people turn up much too early. A few more arrive just as service is over. The rest have straggled in at intervals. Neither priest nor people are in any way troubled, or disturbed, or surprised at each other's want of punctuality. Because, it should be added, that even if the congregation has

gathered at the proper time, it does not follow as a matter of course that the Indian priest will be punctual.

Servants learn to serve meals at the appointed time when they have once grasped the idea that this is required of them, and they do not hesitate to politely rebuke an habitually punctual master if by chance he is late. If the bell for Office at the Mission-house does not ring precisely at the moment, one of the house-boys is sure quickly to appear before whoever is responsible, and will say reproachfully, "Time is finished." Or, if the response to the bell for meals is not immediate, he will come and say sternly, "The bell has rung." But this does not mean that they see the value of punctuality. They look upon it as an English peculiarity which it is expedient to humour, and which the Englishman ought to uphold, but it does not make them punctual in their own social or business arrangements.

Even although most Indians look forward to meal-time with a good deal of relish, they cause their womenkind much inconvenience by the irregular way in which they come home to meals. Not only has the wife the trouble of trying to keep the dinner hot and ready for an indefinite time, but as she never eats until her husband has been fed, she has to fast until he returns.

In the parable of the Marriage Feast and the Great Supper, we read of servants going to tell the guests, who (it should be noticed) had already

been invited, that they were to come, "for all things are now ready." This is what actually takes place in connection with most Indian feasts. The invitation is for a certain hour. But the chance of the meal being ready at that time is very remote. Hence it is usual to tell the more distinguished guests, living within reach, that someone will come and call them when everything is really ready. And the summons is expressed almost in the exact words of the parable.

The few people who happen to arrive at the hour mentioned in their invitation are not disturbed at having to wait for their meal for a period which may extend even to hours. It is to be feared that English guests invited to a dinner-party at seven, and having to wait till nine-thirty before the dinner-bell rang, would not be in a very agreeable frame of mind by the time they sat down to table.

CHAPTER VIII

INDIAN POVERTY

Indian squalor. The Indian's house; how he takes his meals; no home life; physical results. Contrast of the Brahmin doctor's home; his little sons. But without a religion. The Hindu contractor; his visit to the Church; his pathetic position.

WHETHER the sometimes so-called "simplicity" of Indian native life is really a thing to be desired, is a question which it may be well to ask. It is, undoubtedly, a right general principle that each person's life should be kept as homely and simple as circumstances will allow. There is, however, a distinction between simplicity and the squalor of sordid poverty.

A poor Indian lives as he does chiefly because he cannot help himself, and partly, perhaps, because he has no other ideal. But it is at best an unlovely and cramping form of existence. Though he can sustain life on a remarkably small wage, he is nearly always hungry, and has so little stamina that he easily succumbs under serious sickness. He wears but little clothing, and his young children none at all. But he suffers much in the rains because he has no

change of garments, and in the cold weather because his flimsy dress is no protection; and if he gets a little money he gladly buys a blanket, or a warm coat. He has no lamp in his dwelling because he cannot afford it, and after the early nightfall he has to pass his evening hours sitting in the dark, when there is no moon. In almost all the houses of a country village in western India, and in many of the houses in towns, there is no furniture at all. Sometimes there is a small cot for the baby, hung from one of the rafters; and now and then a somewhat larger wooden frame, suspended in the same fashion, is used by the grown-up members of the family to sit or sleep upon. But, as a rule, everybody sits and sleeps on the ground. The floors of the houses are invariably made of earth, beaten down hard, and smeared periodically with a decoction of cow-dung.

Even a well-to-do Indian takes his food sitting on the ground in the place where the food was cooked, which is often a dark lean-to building, attached to the main dwelling. He takes off all his clothing except his *dhota*, and eats with his fingers in silence. Sociality at such a time is out of place; it diverts the mind from the business in hand, which is that of "filling the belly," as the Indian himself commonly expresses it. The women of the household never sit down to dinner with the rest of the family. They wait on the men, and then take their own meal afterwards

by themselves. There is nothing elevating in the process.

The meal of an average Indian Christian family is a complete contrast. Poverty probably compels simplicity and frugality; but father and mother and children sit down together, and there is much sociality. The desire to sit on chairs merely as a mark of distinction is a foolish aspiration. Nevertheless, as an Indian Christian once expressed it to me, "The wish to come off the floor means that we are growing in refinement and politeness."

There are usually no windows in most of the older houses of the poorer people. Modern houses have sometimes several windows, but they are barred and shuttered, and from long habit are usually kept closed by preference. The only movable articles in the houses of the bulk of the Indian population are the brass and copper, or earthenware, cooking pots and pans, and the prosperity of the household can be pretty accurately gauged by the quality, number, and condition of these utensils. A few people own besides an old box or two, generally containing an accumulation of old rags, which nearly all Indians seem to take an interest in collecting. Extra clothes, when they have any, are hung on large wooden pegs, which are fixed into the walls of most rooms in Indian dwellings.

One result of the comfortless and dreary aspect of the interior of an Indian's house is that very few of them have any home life, as we understand it.

The Indian does not sit indoors, unless compelled to do so by sickness, or stress of weather. And though the majority are satisfied so to live, because no other manner of life is known to them, there is nothing beautiful about it. Even from a purely physical point of view, it is an unwholesome state of things. The airless, lightless houses are most unsavoury, and in times of sickness and childbirth this is intensified. It cannot be wondered at that plague, or cholera, or malignant fevers, often make frightful ravages in families. Nor does it tend to elevate the character to sit on a mud floor dozing in the dark, or telling scandalous stories with the children drinking in every word.

By way of contrast, I recall the country home of a Brahmin doctor, who has built himself a house at Yerandawana as a haven of refuge in time of plague. It is surrounded by a little garden, radiant with flowers. It lacks the neatness of an English garden, nevertheless it is something far away ahead of anything which any of his neighbours have attempted. His name means "seven sons." He has already got six, and is hoping for the seventh. These six little sons are dressed in ordinary English boys' dress. They are frequent visitors at the Mission bungalow. It may, of course, be only English prejudice which makes this dress appear to me better for the boys themselves than the scant garments of the Indian. Instead of the usual shorn head and small pigtail, their glossy hair, very neat in the case of the elder boys, tumbled about

in the case of the younger ones, is a delightful contrast.

But to look in at the open door in the evening at their home life, as I have often done, is entirely convincing. A table is in the middle of the room covered with a red cloth; there is a bright lamp, a few pictures are on the walls, and the party of cheerful boys are sitting round the table. Some are playing games, others are drawing, some are looking at books. Though in such a different clime, the sight brought back the memory of winter evenings in boyish days at home.

This Hindu doctor has practically parted with his religion. There are probably no objects of worship in his country home, except a Tulsi plant on a pedestal in the back compound. This plant is a good deal venerated by women, and no doubt was provided for the benefit of the ladies of his household. But although it is some gain to have given up idolatrous customs, and to have adopted some of the refinements of civilised life, he and his little family are in the unhappy condition at present of being without a religion.

A Hindu contractor, who was visiting the church one day, surprised me by saying, as he turned towards one of the pictures hanging on the walls: "This is the baptism of Christ—the river is the Jordan. He was baptized by John." I asked him how he knew all these facts. He replied that he had been educated at a Jesuit school, and that he had learnt them there. I said that, having been

brought up under such circumstances, and having learnt so much and being now well advanced in years, how was it that he was still a Hindu. He answered: "I cannot tell. All I know is that now I do not know what I am."

He asked many intelligent questions. Amongst the rest, did we hear confessions? He was a type of a constantly increasing number of educated men, who, although outwardly appearing as Hindus, only practise the minimum of religious observances, and have no belief at all. Amongst these are men, like the Brahmin doctor, who have imbibed something of the spirit of Christianity from what they have heard and seen, and are distinctly the better for having dropped so much of their Hinduism. But their position is a pathetic one, because so few of them have the courage to act upon the considerable measure of truth which has come home to them.

CHAPTER IX

INDIAN ART

Intrusion of Western ideas; unfortunate result. Royal palaces. Carving and balustrades; graceful domestic utensils; their high polish. Native jewellery; beautiful examples in villages. Incongruous pictures from Europe. Indian oil paintings; effect of Christianity on Indian art; wall decorations. Women's taste in colour.

INDIAN art is sadly degenerating through the intrusion of inferior Western designs. Modern houses in most Indian cities lack the artistic grace which distinguishes many of the old houses of wealthy people. Part of the beauty of many ancient dwellings in Poona City is to be found in their admirable proportions. Modern houses in India are often built in a pseudo-Gothic style, with barbarous innovations in the shape of base metal-work and glaring coloured glass, and in which all sense of proportion has been hopelessly lost.

Some of the modern palaces of Indian Rajahs are built and furnished in this style, at an immense cost, and with most incongruous results. Whereas many of the old palaces, and those of northern India in particular, afford beautiful examples of royal residences, well adapted to the needs of

A Modern House in Poona City, Built by one of the Indian Clergy.

[*To face p.* 60.

Indians, and yet capable of being modified for the use of modern-minded rulers who have adopted some of the household arrangements of the West. Sir Swinton Jacob has shown in the fairy-like palace which he built at Jeypore, but which internally you find exactly suited to the requirements of a modern museum, how possible it is to adapt Indian architecture to present-day needs. There is a good deal of carving, effectively placed and graceful in design and skilfully executed, both on the outside and inside of old houses in the City of Poona; and the balustrades that form the front of the narrow verandahs, which run along so many of the houses with happy effect, afford charming specimens of what the turner's craft can accomplish. But nowadays ironwork, such as adorns a cheap bedstead, more often than not is substituted for the graceful balustrade, and some tawdry decoration, or coarsely-cut stone corbel, takes the place of the picturesque carved woodwork.

The graceful outline of pots and pans used in Indian households has often been remarked upon, and happily at present there are no signs of degeneration in this department of domestic life. The traditional shapes still hold their ground; and even quite common utensils, made of coarse earthenware, are pleasing to look at. The more costly brass and copper vessels in ordinary daily use are delightful examples of how much beauty can be got out of an artistic outline, even when there is an entire absence of ornamentation. In

the midst of a vast amount of apparent disregard for cleanliness, there are certain matters about which a Hindu is excessively particular. The metal cups and pans must be polished up to the highest pitch of perfection, and though the Hindu woman will take the dust or mud of the street for her polishing powder, the result of her labours is that the vessels shine brilliantly. They are the more beautiful because, in order that cleanliness may be assured by the smooth, unbroken surface, they are quite unadorned.

It has sometimes been discussed whether the specimens of old Indian brass in museums should be polished or not, and some collectors carefully preserve the old tarnish. It would be impossible in the English climate to keep the objects continually bright, without infinite labour; but it is well to remember, in considering the artistic merits of any brazen article, that its original normal condition was one of high polish.

Native jewellery is also being influenced for the worse by the infusion of Western ideas. The Indian workers in gold and silver are apt now to imitate the design of the cheap jewellery imported from Europe, and they are not aware that their own traditional designs are really much the most beautiful. Many of the chains and necklaces and bracelets worn by villagers, both male and female, are the best examples of unadulterated Indian art, because modern ideas and shapes have not yet reached them; or, if they see some of these new

devices when they come to give their order to the goldsmith in the city, they are still conservative enough to prefer the designs of their forefathers. There are quaint and ingenious devices for fastening the necklaces, and part of the charm of the primitive handiwork is its individual character, shown in a certain roughness and want of rigid symmetry.

In the houses of the more old-fashioned wealthy Hindus, in their big reception-room, only rarely used, may be seen curious examples of the mistakes which may be made so easily when introducing objects of art from another country without adequate knowledge. Pictures from England, interspersed with mirrors, form the chief decoration on the walls of many of these saloons. They are hung almost touching each other, very high up, like the "sky-ed" line of the Royal Academy, but with nothing on the walls below, and they often present a most curious jumble: a few good engravings; gaudy pictures, first issued as advertisements; portraits of persons, known and unknown; worthless prints in gorgeous frames; and a picture with some merit, stuck all awry in a frame which does not belong to it.

In the houses of a younger generation you will see large oil paintings by modern Indian artists, in heavy gilt frames and properly hung, although still rather higher than is usual with us. Some are family portraits; some are scenes from the histories of the gods. The colours used are exceedingly

brilliant, and the picture itself is often painted on a very bright background. The drawing, which used to be the defective part of Indian pictures, is much improving now that drawing has become a regular part of the education of the Indian boy.

It is rather difficult to judge of the artistic value of a picture painted in a style so unlike Western models. But on the whole one is led to think that the brilliant colours are suited to the country, and that they are blended with astonishing taste, considering the extreme difficulty of blending happily hues of such a pronounced character. If only the study of Western examples helps to purify the Indian style without destroying its individuality, one would hope that Indian artists will eventually produce pictures which will have a great charm of their own.

Their mythology for the most part only supplies them with gods whose traditional form is either grotesque, or repulsive, or sensual. But when Christianity has been accepted, and incorporated into the lives of the people, the wide field for artistic and religious effect which will then open out will give new scope, and one may expect some very striking results when familiar scenes of sacred story are depicted by the Eastern pencil and brush.

Indians are fond of decorating the outside whitewashed walls of their temples and houses with mural paintings. They often present a quaint mixture of hunting-scenes, and animals and gods, and soldiers and Indians and Europeans. One

such fresco, on the wall of the house of the headman of Yerandawana village, is a most comical reproduction of the garden front of Windsor Castle, taken from an *Illustrated London News*, but embellished with many Indian characteristics. The purely decorative part of these wall pictures is often graceful and harmonious, and one can look forward to the day when the Christian Indian artist will joyfully decorate, in his own traditional style, the bare white walls of the village Church of St Crispin, and beautiful saints and angels will take the place of the dethroned gods.

The, often richly coloured, garments of the Indian woman, whether poor or rich, are always in perfect taste and harmony; even the Parsee ladies, who boldly use colours of astonishing brilliancy in their dresses, seem to be able to do so without producing that amazing discord of colour which greets the traveller from the East as he comes back Westwards into the streets of a European city.

CHAPTER X

THE INDIAN VILLAGE

The village Panchayat; a rough and ready tribunal; its decisions. Magisterial trial of offences on the spot. The Christian Panchayat; its doubtful results; fans the spirit of discord; undesirable reiteration of incidents. Want of wholesome reserve. Knowledge of evil. Out-caste villagers no longer servile; disposal of dead carcases; burial of strangers. Mahars growing prosperous.

In Indian villages there is what is called a Panchayat, or committee of five, for the settlement of disputes, although of late years many of the Panchayats have become practically moribund. The members of this council are chosen from the leading men of the village. All kinds of disputes can be submitted to this court of arbitration, from cases of cattle trespass, or doubtful land boundaries, to breaches of Hindu religious custom. It is the Panchayat which has the power to out-caste a man—a dreaded punishment—which means that his relations and friends will no longer hold intercourse with him; no one will hand him food or water; shopkeepers may refuse to serve him; and if he dies, none of his own people will bury or

MRS SALOME ZADHAW.

(Swithun's Wife.)

[To face p. 66.

cremate him, but his body will be left to be disposed of by the scavengers.

The Panchayat is only a rough and ready way of settling disputes, or punishing minor offences. Much of the evidence in the cases which come before it is either false or else grossly distorted. The members of the Panchayat are already probably prejudiced either for or against the offender, and make no attempt to rise above their prejudices. Any one of them will side with the party who will make it worth his while to do so.

The final decision may, or may not, be in accordance with the facts of the case. The guilty person, if an offence has been committed, may escape; and an innocent person, who has few friends and little to offer, may get punished. Men who are poor and unpopular sometimes get sorely bullied, and even ill-treated, in an Indian village. Nevertheless, at present the Panchayat has its use in Hindu India, and the prospect of being brought under its power is a wholesome terror. When India has progressed a stage further this primitive mode of procedure, already a good deal discredited, will no doubt be superseded altogether.

Unfortunately, even in more august tribunals where the desire to be true and just is uppermost, false evidence is so rife that there has to be a good deal of guesswork, and calculations of probabilities, when trying to come to a right decision. It has lately been advocated that magistrates should, when practicable, hold their preliminary trial of

offences in the village where the misdemeanour is alleged to have taken place. The witnesses under these circumstances are more disposed to give a true account of what has happened. They are surrounded by neighbours who know, to some extent, whether they are speaking the truth or not, and are apt to betray them in case of falsehood. But if the inquiry takes place at a city police-court, the witnesses come in contact with the false witnesses, and bad characters, and petty lawyers (or "pleaders" as they are called), who hang about in the vicinity, and the usual result is that having been tampered with by some interested person, all hopes of an honest narrative are at an end.

There is a laudable desire to adapt Indian customs to the needs of Indian Christians. The result has not always been the success which was hoped for. The truth is, that what may be advantageous in the heathen world may be quite otherwise when applied to the circumstances of the Christian community. Because it was the old custom in Hindu villages to settle difficulties, secular and religious, by a Panchayat, it was thought that it would be advantageous to exercise discipline in the Church in the same way. It was well to give it a trial, but many begin to doubt its applicability. The Indian often is, like many others, a man of strong prejudices, and even Christianity is not altogether successful in uprooting this fault. His likes and dislikes are

pronounced, and are not always according to reason. Certain excellent people will side with a pronounced wrongdoer, for no apparent cause; not necessarily from a charitable desire to give him another chance. Also, the pleasing Indian characteristic of regard for family relationship, which is so strong, leads to an anxiety to belittle the wrongdoings of anyone who can claim kinship, and this may be carried even to the verge of distortion, or suppression of the truth. Anyhow, the conclusions of the Christian Panchayat are, not unfrequently, singularly at variance with what would appear to be the right verdict.

There is another reason why the Panchayat, as applied to Christian congregations, is not altogether wholesome. The true spirit of charity is a difficult virtue to acquire. When two people quarrel, unless they quickly forgive, they are generally anxious to air their grievance. Indians in particular wish the whole matter gone into with elaboration, so that, as they say, justice may be done. The Panchayat gives exactly the opening which they crave. A quarrel between two neighbours, which ought to have been quickly adjusted by mutual forgiveness, becomes a subject of endless discussion. Many others get dragged into it; and the spirit of discord, instead of being laid to rest by the proceedings of the Panchayat, often finds a greatly enlarged scope for mischief.

In bringing a case of immorality before this tribunal the evil is intensified. The matter is gone

into minutely, with much freedom of expression. Nor does it end there. The members of the Panchayat return to their homes, and, with the fullest detail, repeat to wife and children the incidents that the inquiry has disclosed. For days it is the all-engrossing subject of conversation. "There is no reserve amongst us in the sense that you English people have it," said a leading Indian Christian to me; "there is nothing which our children do not know." Consulting an intelligent Christian Indian on the difficult question as to how much might be said with safety when warning the young on the subject of purity, he replied: "It is impossible to teach them anything which they do not know already. Other people talk to them, and the youngest know all that there is to be known."

It should be added, that although with very few exceptions this is certainly true, the knowledge of evil does not, as a matter of course, produce evil, and there are many Indian Christian lads who, sustained by the power of sacramental grace, are leading lives of exemplary self-control, while living in circumstances of great temptation.

Whatever may have been the case in years gone by, the out-caste people of a village are not now the downtrodden, servile folk such as they are commonly supposed to be, although there are still instances of individual oppression. Most of them are leading more wholesome lives than those of the richer, self-indulgent men, and this is

evidenced by their more vigorous and manly frame. They are, to some extent, at the beck and call of the chief men of the place, and more especially of the *Patel*, but they are independent in their bearing, and obey cheerfully without cringing. Some of their duties may sound unsavoury. As, for instance, they are responsible for the removal of a dead carcase found within the village boundary. But if it is the body of an animal fit for food, such as a buffalo, sheep, or goat, they feast upon it themselves, quite regardless of what disease it may have died of.

A buffalo belonging to the Mission died from snake-bite, as it was supposed, though that sometimes is only another name for wilful poisoning. The disposal of its immense carcase seemed a perplexity. But just as we were considering this point, we saw the buffalo travelling away at a rapid pace on the shoulders of the village Mahars, who took it as their natural perquisite, and did not think it necessary to wait for leave. The horns, hoofs, skin, and bones are marketable commodities, so that, besides the feast, they often make a good thing out of agricultural tragedies.

The same class of men are responsible for any stray burials, which are not at all uncommon in a country where there are many homeless wanderers, some of whom, when weary and ill, just lie down by the roadside and die. The Mahars of the nearest village bury the nameless corpse. The clothes of the dead man are sufficient

recompense for hasty interment in a shallow grave, and the jackals the next night probably discover, and make short work of, the corpse. I have seen the body of some such poor wanderer, with scarcely a rag upon it, slung upon a pole and carried like a dead dog by a couple of Mahars along the high-road to a place of burial.

Many low-caste men have, of late years, grown prosperous and acquired land of their own. In the neighbourhood of cities some of them get well-paid posts as night-watchmen, and as they are often frugal people, they gradually put by a good deal of money. The servants of Europeans are also largely drawn from this class, and a capable servant is able to secure wages which, together with pickings in the shape of tips and perquisites, enable him to save. The low-caste people of a village often present a brilliant appearance when they turn out in holiday attire on some festal day, and the gold ornaments of the women sufficiently indicate their prosperous condition. That they have their own quarter, outside the village proper, does not cause them any searchings of heart. They come into the village freely, and talk and mix with the other people, and Mahar boys often play with the other children. But when there is a village feast they have, of course, to sit quite apart.

There are indications that the village low-caste people are beginning to retaliate for whatever oppression they may have had to undergo, by

RAGU, THE NIGHT WATCHMAN.

[*To face p.* 72.

becoming rather insolent to their betters. Some of them are also using the facilities for education which late years have put within their reach with good effect, and have gradually risen to positions of importance in Government and other service.

CHAPTER XI

INDIAN ENTERTAINMENTS

Indian titles. The Inamdar. The *pan supari* party. Mohammedan saints. The *nautch;* why objectionable. The Inamdar's house; its decorations; furniture. Mohammedan full-dress. The guests; nature of the entertainment. The guests garlanded; no hostess. General conclusions; not an occasion for a missionary.

THE titles belonging to Indians of real or imaginary importance take up an astonishing amount of space on paper. I received an invitation to what is called on the card, a *pan supari* party. The person who issues the invitation is, so the card informs me, "Sardar Khanbahadur Kazi Sayed Azimodin Gulamodin Pirzade Inamdar." His real name is Azimodin. The rest could be dispensed with. He is the Mohammedan chief of Yerandawana. Part of the revenue of that village was, at some distant date, allotted to a mosque in Poona City. It is therefore called an *Inam* village, and the holder of the grant is called the *Inamdar*, the word "inam" meaning "grant." A small percentage of the Government land tax is paid over to the Inamdar, and he has other small perquisites, such as the fruit of certain

trees. He also has some privileges connected with the river which flows past Yerandawana; as, for instance, gravel cannot be taken from it without paying him a royalty. He also has certain rights over the stone quarries and the pasturage on some of the hills.

Pan supari is the betel nut wrapped up in a leaf, which is distributed to guests on festal occasions, and chewed by those who like it. It is one of the few things which can be accepted and eaten without prejudice to caste. Just as in England you might be asked to a "tea" party, so here in India we were asked to a *pan supari* party; only, unfortunately, there is nothing very satisfying in the betel nut, although all Indians are fond of it.

Mohammedans have a great respect for the memory of those of their number whom they regard as "saints"; whether they are technically or actually such does not seem to matter much. Many of their tombs may be noticed in cities and villages, or by the roadside under some spreading tree. The festival of each local saint is kept by the Mohammedans of that locality with prayers and feasting and merrymaking for several days. The occasion of the *pan supari* party was the festival of the local saint of the mosque which adjoined the Inamdar's house in the city. The saint's names and titles were also of formidable dimensions—"Peer Sayed Hisamodin Kattal Junjani Chishte."

I consulted another friendly Mohammedan as to whether I could safely accept the invitation without running the risk of finding myself a sharer in festivities of a doubtful character. He said that these sort of festivals always commenced with great propriety, but often degenerated as they proceeded. But that the *pan supari* party to which English were invited was sure to be eminently respectable, while the concluding days would probably be devoted to singing and dancing of the usual dubious kind.

Unfortunately, parties to which English are invited by both Hindus and Mohammedans are not always free from objectionable features. Not unfrequently part of the entertainment is dancing, and sometimes singing, by professional performers. English people sometimes plead that there is nothing particularly objectionable in the nature of the dance, and that the singing is in a language which they do not understand. But it is the character of the women who dance and sing which some English people are not aware of. They are invariably professional women of bad character, because no other kind of Indian woman ever takes part in public performances of this nature in the presence of men. And it is on this ground that Christians ought always to refuse invitations to any festivity in which a *nautch*, or dance, is put down as one of the events, stating politely the reason of refusal. Indians often arrange for entertainments of this kind because

they imagine that it is the sort of thing which Europeans enjoy. A few officials of high rank have done good service by intimating that they do not wish to be entertained in this manner.

I accepted the Inamdar's invitation. I thought it might be useful experience. The hour was from five to six. The address was nearly as long as the host's name—"Badi Darga, Riverside, Zuni Mandai, in front of Shanwar Wada, Kasba Peth, Poona City." But, in spite of these precise directions, it would have been a difficult place for anyone to find who was not pretty well acquainted with the labyrinths of the old city.

Sometimes one is tempted to smile as one thinks of the splendour of Eastern entertainments, or of the "gorgeous East," as it exists in the imagination of many English people, or in the mind of the newspaper correspondent of an Eastern tour. The triumphal arch at the entrance of the narrow lane leading to the Inamdar's house might have made an effective Indian photograph for home consumption. But the poles, draped with pink muslin, were a grateful sight only because they told us that we were on the right track. Also, a coat of gravel newly spread along the lane was a welcome indication that there was no need to walk with the caution which is expedient in most of the streets of Poona City.

The Inamdar's house is by the river side, and the river being at that time in flood and full from bank to bank, it would have been a picturesque

sight, if it had not been for the colour of the water, which gave the impression of a river of rolling mud. This is the case with most Indian rivers, and detracts a good deal from their beauty. The buildings forming the Inamdar's establishment enclosed an irregular sort of courtyard. On one side of this was the mosque and the tomb of the saint. The residential part of the premises formed another side, into which the mixed assembly of a *pan supari* party would not be allowed to penetrate. A third side of the courtyard was occupied by a long, low, whitewashed shed, open in front, and with a few small windows at the back looking on to the river, and this was arranged for the reception of the guests. It was elaborately festooned with paper flowers and other adornments, something after the fashion of Christmas-tree decorations. The effect was more gay than artistic. I have never been able to ascertain where the particular sort of furniture originally came from which adorns the reception-rooms of Indians who are in a position to occasionally entertain distinguished guests. It is a little like what is sometimes seen on the stage. The sofas and chairs are very ornate, and equally uncomfortable. The carpets are often really handsome, because their design and manufacture is an art which is thoroughly understood in the East, and in more primitive days they would have formed almost the only furniture of a reception-hall.

Out in the compound were flowers in pots,

after the manner of an Indian garden, and a few trees, as well as one or two tombs of Mohammedan saints of a somewhat lower rank than Peer Sayed Hisamodin. A strip of red cloth from the place where carriages were to set down, indicated that visitors were to make their way into the shed. I was amongst the earliest arrivals, and was received by the Inamdar and his son with all that graceful courtesy which no one knows better how to show than an Indian. The full dress of a Mohammedan is striking and effective. They never of course wear the *dhota*, which is the garment of Hindus, but they wear instead trousers, fitting very close at the foot, but of great width in the upper part.

I thought it prudent to ask what the order of proceedings would be. They told me that there would be a little music, and distribution of garlands and *pan supari*, and finally dancing. I replied that I could not witness the last item in the programme. The Inamdar's son intimated that this item would not come off till later on in the evening, when the Europeans would have left. I asked him how they could be willing to receive into their house women of the character of the dancers. He looked sheepish, and was no doubt relieved that another arrival called him away.

We presented a curious medley when all were assembled. A Hindu Collector drove up in his motor car, faultlessly dressed in English clothes, and so like a courteous European in his general bearing that, except for his white and gold turban,

it might have been difficult to suppose that he was not one. Many Indians are, comparatively speaking, very fair, and if you are living habitually in the country you become almost oblivious to shades of complexion. The English Collector also arrived, with his wife. Collectors are, of course, magistrates and officials of importance. The Commissioner of the division followed, who is senior to a Collector. Mohammedans, Hindus, and a few Parsees arrived, some in smart carriages, a few in hired conveyances, and others on foot. Another motor car with an Indian owner drove up. At present the dash, and go, and smartness of a motor-car seem strangely out of keeping with the spirit of leisure, and delay, and general shabbiness so marked in things Indian.

When the party might be said to be in full swing I do not know that it was much duller, or more pointless, than receptions in England. Certainly a cup of tea is more refreshing than the fragment of betel nut wrapped up in a leaf and enclosed in a piece of gold paper. Few Europeans have courage to eat it, but it should always be accepted, and after your departure you can gladden the heart of any native by giving it to him. A few Indians provide spirituous drinks for their English visitors, under the idea that they cannot exist without a whisky peg. And, indeed, it is said that some young English guests confirm this belief by the use they make of the drinks provided.

A couple of Mohammedan men came forward,

and seating themselves on a carpet gave a brief musical performance, after which a man sung a song with an air of such comical affectation that it was difficult to maintain the serious gravity with which the Indian part of the audience listened to him. Preparations for a photograph of the assembled company commencing, it was an indication that it was time for me to depart. All the more distinguished guests had been previously decorated with garlands of pink roses and white jasmine, and in addition they were given a kind of sceptre, made of the same sort of flowers tied to a short stick. The less remarkable people received an inferior garland and a single rose with a few leaves, made up like a button-hole; and a certain unimportant residuum did not receive any decoration at all.

Perhaps what, to English eyes, appeared the most obvious blot in the proceedings was the absence of any hostess. Both the old Inamdar and his son had several wives, but except the English ladies who came as guests, there were no females of any sort visible. One of these ladies asked me whether the Inamdar would be displeased if she suggested a visit to his wife, because she had once met her at one of those parties which some kindly English people have tried to organise for the benefit of the more exclusive women who live behind the *purdah*, or curtain. So I told the Inamdar that the Madam Sahib would be pleased to visit *his* Madam Sahib. He smiled, and bowed,

and made a little bustle as if he was going to make arrangements for it, but I do not think that anything came of it.

The point that I was anxious to learn from my attendance at the Inamdar's party was whether, on the whole, it is advantageous for English people to accept such invitations or not. The conclusion that I came to was that, since it helps to some extent to bring about a mutual understanding, it is a good thing for kindly Government officials and their ladies to do, but that it is not the sort of occasion when there is scope for a missionary. As a guest he is bound to be courteous to his host, and if any practice is indulged in which may call for rebuke, it is not easy to administer it without the appearance of rudeness. Already some modern-minded Hindus urge that all religions are alike, and that Christianity being suited to Europeans and the Eastern religions to the people of the East, there is no need to change. If the teachers of Christianity share in the social gatherings of educated Indians with the politeness and cordiality which such occasions demand, it may foster the impression that unbelief and idolatry are no real barriers to mutual unity of heart, and that one religion is as good as another.

CHAPTER XII

THE CONVERSION OF INDIA

Missions still in the experimental stage. Effect of education on conversion. Brahmins and conversion. Caution needed in time of famine. People applying for work; caution again necessary. India and dissent; rival organisations, effect on the heathen; dissenters drawing to the Church.

It is an evidence of the perplexity which attends mission work in India that many apparently elementary principles are still undecided questions and subjects of discussion. Things are still in the experimental stage. Almost every conceivable form of missionary enterprise has been attempted; but the result is that no one method in any department stands out as being signally better than another. Perhaps the only definite conclusion that has been arrived at is the obvious one, that the man is of more importance than the method, and where there has been marked progress it has always been the personality of the worker, sanctified and energised by God's grace, which has been the moving power.

The conversion of India has been a slower and more difficult task than some people at one time

anticipated. Possibly it has been hindered by too much haste at the outset. India has to be gradually educated up to Christianity. At one time it was thought that the best way to do this was to provide an advanced secular education, and that the mind thus elevated would be ready to grasp and accept spiritual truths. No doubt this has been the result in a few instances, but the more general outcome has been that secular interests have become so absorbing that spiritual matters have been crowded out, and the mind has proved less rather than more receptive.

Great efforts have been made to reach the so-called "high-caste" men of India. This was done, partly under the idea that their traditional intelligence and opportunities of education would make them specially capable of religious thought, and partly because it was felt that the conversion of some of the leading men of India would surely result in the conversion of the rest. There have been many notable conversions of Brahmins, so that these efforts cannot be said to have been wholly without result. But it must be added that the results do not seem commensurate with the amount of labour and money which has been expended in this particular direction. It was, perhaps, not sufficiently taken into account that mere intellect may in itself be a barrier to the reception of spiritual truth, unless there is also the grace of humility and the desire to be taught. A Brahmin who has been trained from his earliest

boyhood to think himself worthy of divine honour, naturally finds it difficult to sit at the feet of a foreign teacher who preaches the need of repentance.

Nor does the conversion of a Brahmin lead to the conversion of other Indians to the extent that might have been expected. Possibly the unpopularity of Brahmins as a class, although they are still to some extent venerated and feared, may partly account for the fact that the conversion of some of them has not made others anxious to follow their lead. In the case of low-caste people the conversion of a few has, in many instances, led on to the conversion of large numbers. The multitude of village folk who have, at various times, pressed forward for baptism has been in certain places a real perplexity. The clerical staff has been wholly inadequate to deal with them, and the greater part of their instruction has had to be left to lay teachers, not very competent for the task.

In some of the earlier famines missionaries were not always sufficiently alive to the risk of people professing a desire for Christianity, when their real motive was the hope of getting special consideration when famine relief was distributed. In some districts serious lapses took place after the distress was over. It is now the almost universal rule in missions, in order to avoid the risk of imposture, not to baptize any converts during the period when a district is suffering from

famine. The time of probation before baptism has also been gradually prolonged in most Church missions. But some workers, in their natural eagerness for the extension of Christ's kingdom, are perhaps too ready to accept the protestations of ignorant people in poor circumstances who say that they wish to become Christians. The work which is given to them as a test is, almost of necessity, lighter than that which they have previously been accustomed to do. Whether the limited amount of genuine spiritual desire probable in such cases should be accepted as sufficient, is difficult to decide. Some of the older missions, with an experience covering a long period, make it their invariable rule not to accept a religious inquirer for definite instruction if he is out of work. He is told that he must first get work, and then come for instruction.

Not unfrequently people who come to a mission applying for work, say that if this is provided they are willing to become Christians. When the village church of St Crispin was building, quite a number of Hindus at different times asked for the post of caretaker of the building when completed. And when it was urged in reply that a Christian church ought to have a Christian caretaker, several of them said that if the post was given to them, they were ready to conform as regards Christianity. Some dissenters still baptize rashly, with scarcely any probation and less teaching, and some have drifted so far from

gospel truth that they receive converts into their society without baptizing them at all.

India has both suffered and gained from the number of religious sects who have sent missionaries to convert her. No religious society seems to think its machinery complete unless it has a mission in India. The point of view from which she may be said to have gained from this is, that where the need of workers is so great, any Christian teachers who are in earnest are, in a sense, welcome. Nor are theological differences so acute in the pioneer stage of work, when only elementary principles are being taught. But, on the other hand, the result is a bewildering multiplication of missionary efforts. Apart from the amount of conflicting and erroneous teaching which is ultimately the inevitable outcome, there is a great waste of energy and funds in the support of a number of organisations which might be concentrated into one. Also, rivalry amongst missions of conflicting opinions has resulted in mission stations being planted in close proximity to each other. Roman Catholics in particular are offenders in this respect. The consequence is that, while on the one hand some districts are overdone with mission workers, on the other hand there are vast tracts of country without any.

The varied forms in which Christianity is thus presented is not so great a stumbling-block to the heathen people as might be thought likely.

Hindus and Mohammedans are themselves divided up into such numerous sects that they are not much surprised to find that such is the case amongst Christians. But it is amongst earnest-minded Indians who have been baptized by dissenters that difficulties develop. As the spiritual energies of the convert from Hinduism become more pronounced, he often begins to crave for what the religious system in which he finds himself is unable to give. If such souls come into touch with Catholic influences, they often discover that it is the grace of the sacraments which their souls are needing, and there is amongst Indian Christians a fairly steady flow from dissent into the Church.

CHAPTER XIII

MISSION WORK IN INDIA

Transfer of responsibility to Indians. Clergy desiring independence. Indian characteristics will remain. Want of tidiness; experiences in an Indian Priest's parish. English stiffness. Indian Suffragan Bishops. The Indian Bishop's Confirmation. Changes of head in a mission. English workers losing sympathy; consequent loss; need for prayer concerning this. The opinion of an old missionary; "too much of the individual, too little of the Holy Spirit."

ONE of the perplexities of mission work in India is how best to gradually transfer European responsibility and control to the people of the country. Some of the attempts in this direction not having been altogether a success, there have been missionaries who, despairing of any other arrangement, went into the opposite extreme and endeavoured to keep everything in their own hands. Their attitude also towards their native workers, and even towards their brother priests, was not of a nature calculated to draw out loyal and cheerful service.

Amongst Indian clergy there is a widespread desire for greater independence and responsibility, backed up by many of the laity, and unless it can

be rightly met in some way, it might easily become a serious danger. If people are ever to learn to run alone, they must be given the opportunity of doing so. If some stumble in the attempt, that is only what must be expected at first. Amongst a few failures, there are other instances in which the experiment of leaving the management of affairs to Indians has been all that could be wished. Indian priests have been put in charge of wide districts which they have shepherded with unwearied labour; and when congregations are apparently backward in the financial support of their church, they will nearly always rise to the occasion manfully and do all that is required, if the management of the church funds is definitely put into their own hands.

It is a mistake to expect to find in the government of affairs by Indians certain characteristics which are essentially English. The Indian Christian remains an Indian, and from some points of view it is best that so it should be. Exactness and order and punctuality are matters which most Englishmen think much of. Most Indians think little of them, and few pay much attention to them. A really neat house or field is rarely to be seen in native India. The sort of neatness and order which an English priest thinks of importance in the church under his care would never be found in the church of even the most conscientious Indian priest. It

usually takes a long course of patient training before the Indian representative of the English parish clerk learns how to lay a carpet, or to put kneelers or chairs, straight. And though he learns his lesson at last, and then for ever does it rightly in the prescribed way, he does not himself see any benefit in it. And the crooked carpet and irregular row of chairs, which would disturb the devotions of the lady workers in the mission, would never be noticed by a single member of the Indian congregation.

I once spent a night in the village of a devout and widely-known and highly-respected Indian priest, now gone to his rest. Evensong was held in the open air in front of his house, because of certain insect intruders which had taken possession of the room which, at that time, did duty as a church. Since those days a permanent church has been built. Goats and cattle coming home, and taking short cuts to their quarters, were a little disconcerting to the preacher, inexperienced in interruptions of the kind, but the regular congregation took it as a matter of course.

The next morning I was to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, which, of course, had to be in the church, in spite of the intruders. I went at the appointed hour and found the Indian priest just beginning to make preparations. Vestments and altar linen and many other things were mixed up in a box, in complete disorder, and

it took him a long time to sort out what was needed, and when at last all was ready, the result would have been heart-breaking to an English sacristan. Service necessarily began long after the proper time, but that created neither surprise nor annoyance. The fact being that defects of the kind are not felt to be such by an Indian congregation, so that they did not in any way diminish the influence for good of this excellent priest.

It is often the very stiffness and rigidity of English methods which hinders their acceptability amongst Indian people. On the other hand, the Indian priest is more patient in dealing with the people's difficulties. Rustics in England relate the history of a quarrel, or sickness, or death at great length. But their tale is brevity itself compared to the Indian's story of a grievance, and he expects to be listened to patiently till he has had his full say. This the Indian priest readily does, and he himself is not wearied by the recital. But the English priest, even before the end of the preface, has probably said that he has no time to listen to all these details, and that they must settle the matter amongst themselves.

The circumstances of the country at its present stage of development, with a certain number of English, mostly official, gathered into cantonments, or scattered here and there in isolated places, and a limited but steadily increas-

ing number of Indian Christians, who are for the most part not in touch with the European element, make an Indian bishop for any of the dioceses as at present constituted out of the question. But there are certain country districts covering a wide area in which the number of Indian Christians is very great. An Indian suffragan bishop might well be given jurisdiction over one of these areas. There are certainly some Indian priests fitted for such a trust. The result would probably be a great growth of spiritual life, and wholesome church organisation, and self-support. The tradition of an Indian bishop for Indians getting established in this way there would eventually, if he acquitted himself well in his limited sphere, be no difficulty about his ministering to English congregations when it was convenient that he should do so.

But it should be observed that the Indian bishop must be allowed to retain his own individuality, and to do his diocesan work in his own Eastern way. Very possibly he will arrive for his Confirmation long after the appointed time, even if he does not send a message at the last moment to say that he will come to-morrow. If, by any misfortune, there should be a European in the expectant congregation, he will say indignantly that this is what comes of appointing Indian bishops. But the Indian congregation will be quite undisturbed. Those who happen to have come punctually will sit

about in the church compound, in the sun or shade according to the time of day, and chat happily till the bishop arrives. His lateness would not create the least shade of annoyance. He himself will probably have to wait in his turn for the candidates from a neighbouring village who were vague about the time. But he will do so with the utmost cheerfulness. Except that unpunctuality means waste of time, it will have no other drawback.

When the actual Confirmation takes place after these possible delays, it will be carried out by the Indian bishop with the greatest solemnity. He and the candidates will have the fullest faith in the wondrous Gift bestowed by means of the imposition of the Apostolic hands. His address will be powerful and persuasive, and given with full knowledge of the characteristics of the people of his own country. Everyone will return to their homes happy and thankful, and in telling their tale of the wonders of the day it will not probably occur to anybody to mention that the bishop arrived late.

Now and then mission stations suffer, somewhat in the same way as a parish here and there in England does, from the change of policy brought about by a change of head. It is in practical, rather than in religious matters, that a new head is sometimes the cause of unrest. Missions being at present chiefly worked by societies which have their own theological bias, the new-comer is

generally of the same way of thinking as his predecessor. But anyone coming to India for the first time, in spite of everything being new and strange, is apt to think that he sees his way clearly, and that the work has got into a rut and that a general upheaval is necessary. The tendency of the Indian is to be conservative of established traditions. He does not say much, but he has his own way of showing the new head that he does not approve of his changes. Some resign office, of others it is decided that they have been too long at their posts, and the result is that a certain number of old and faithful workers cut themselves, or are themselves cut adrift. The new head ultimately establishes his position, and many of his changes are probably improvements, but this has been accomplished at considerable sacrifice. Missions worked by communities are not wholly free from the same defect, though they suffer less than others.

English workers do not always retain the spirit of sympathy and graciousness with which they began their ministry in India. The defects of the Indian character are particularly galling to some Englishmen. The sort of faults which the average Englishman is least willing to condone are unpunctuality, untidiness, promises not kept, inexact answers and false excuses, forgetfulness of favours received but fresh favours asked for, slovenly work, laziness, and obstinacy. When the missionary first meets his flock he sees pleasant and courteous

manners, and readiness to please and to obey, a certain aptitude and handiness in work, a real spirit of devotion, and many such-like qualities. The dark skin, the picturesque dress or absence of dress, the bare feet and light graceful walk, all these things appeal to the new-comer.

As time goes on he has to deal with the realities of things. Difficulties, failures, disappointments have to be faced. A reaction sets in. He thinks that the people need a firmer hand, that they have been dealt with too lightly. He no longer keeps the good side uppermost, and begins to see only the defects. He gets the mission possibly into good external order, but much of the grace and beauty of his ministry goes out in the process, and there will be no attractive force at work to draw in the heathen. The worker in India needs to pray constantly that the spirit of love and sympathy, and the yearning to help souls with which he began, may never be allowed to grow less; that he may retain his spirit of buoyancy; that he may keep hopeful and expectant; and that while firm and strong with the people who need his support, he may only love them the more when he has learnt really to understand and know them.

A missionary in India of long and wide experience wrote that he had often pondered as to the reason why the Church in that land has never become a real indigenous plant. He went on to say—"Even if we were to put aside the tradition of St Thomas having preached here, we know that,

at anyrate from the eighth century onwards, with only a few intermissions, there has been Christian effort at work in the country." The conclusion that he came to was that "there has been too much of the individual and too little of the Holy Spirit. St Francis Xavier baptized thousands of children, and then went his way. The Church has always depended on foreign aid, and when left to itself has either died away or kept itself alive by maintaining a sort of Christian caste. The Eastern people are, to a certain extent, pliant and easily led. The somewhat masterful foreign missionary had bent the people to his will and his ways. The house has been built square and solid, and finished in appearance. But it is a building, not a plant. It has not within it the power of life and growth. There has been more building than sowing. It depends on the force of the individual, and but little room is left for the power of the Holy Spirit to make it really fruitful."

CHAPTER XIV

INDIAN MUSIC

Women singing as they grind. Singing to the bullocks. Singing on the road. The rest-house. Soldiers singing. Palanquin bearers. Indian taste in music. Indian musical instruments. The native band. The "Europe" band. Sir G. Clarke on Indian music. Evil associations of native tunes. Indian choir-boys.

ONE of the commonest sounds in India is that of women grinding at the mill. You not only hear the grating of the revolving stone, but since it is a hard and monotonous task, the toilers almost invariably enliven it by singing. They do so rather melodiously, and it sounds pleasant in the distance. Their songs are to a large extent made up on the spur of the moment, and form a sort of running comment on what they are doing, or on what is going on around them.

This custom of singing in order to relieve the monotony of labour is universal in certain departments, and even the beasts get to look upon it as a stimulus to work. When drawing water from the wells, the man in charge of the operation invariably encourages the bullocks with a cheery sing-song, at the critical moment when they are

raising the heavy leather pouch of water from the well, and if he was to remain silent, the Indian bullock, who is a strong conservative, would certainly refuse to start. When they travel round and round, working the mill which squeezes the juice out of the sugar cane, or, in the same fashion, causing the great stone wheel to revolve which grinds the mortar, their master alternately whips them and sings to them. I once listened to the song which the man sung when they were making mortar. It was something like this—"Oh bullocks! what a work you are doing. Going round and round making mortar for the masons. Oh bullocks! go faster, go faster! The masons will cry out, oh bullocks, for more mortar —more mortar. So, go faster, go faster," etc., etc.

On bright moonlight nights large parties of men and women come trotting briskly along the Yerandawana road, bearing baskets of fruit on their heads for the Poona market. Indians nearly always go at a trot if they have an unusually heavy burden to carry far, and it appears to make their task easier. I do not know whether other nations have the same custom. There are many reasons why travelling by night is preferable. The air is cool and pleasant, there is no scorching sun to injure the fruit, and it gets into market in good time before the rush of business commences. A charitable Hindu has built a rest-house for the benefit of travellers, just opposite the gateway of the village mission. Such rest-houses are to be

found all over India. They are only what we in England would call a shed, but they provide as much shelter as the climate demands, and they are a great boon to the many who travel the roads on business or pleasure. The Yerandawana rest-house is often thronged with people, because it is so near Poona that they can get some hours sleep, and yet get into market early. But the travellers, who go swiftly along the road with their burden of fruit, often sing delightfully in chorus for the greater part of the way, so that what is really a task of great toil seems almost transformed into a cheerful excursion.

Indian soldiers on the march are sometimes allowed to sing as they go, or occasionally to whistle, which has a delightful effect. Some years back, when visitors could only reach certain hill-stations by being carried in a palanquin, unless they were sturdy climbers, because the steep paths were not practicable for wheels, the team of six or eight coolies who acted as bearers, turn and turn about, sung a good deal, especially in the more difficult parts of the journey. They did not realise that the Sahib they were carrying sometimes understood the vernacular, and was able to appreciate their poetical comments on his weight, or their musical speculations as to what sort of tip he was likely to give them at the end of the journey.

People sometimes ask whether Indians are musical. It is difficult to say. Indian taste in

music is certainly peculiar, and perhaps deserves greater study than it has yet secured. But it would lead the casual listener to suppose that music amongst them is still in the elementary stage, corresponding somewhat to the scales and time exercises of the beginner. At the Inamdar's afternoon party, the musical performance given by the two Mohammedans (p. 80) was probably a fair sample of what would be considered refined music. One of the performers had a kind of guitar with a large body, made out of a gourd with a section sliced off and then faced with wood, and with a very long stem. The whole instrument, with all its fittings, was exquisitely made.

The other man had a large and peculiar instrument, called a *bin*, in which the long keyboard is supported at each end with a big gourd. There dried gourds are largely in request for musical purposes. The *bin* was also artistically finished, and adorned with brasswork and inlaid woods. It had five or six strings. The performer played on it with his fingers after the manner of a guitar, one of the gourds resting on his shoulder. These instruments being so attractive in appearance, and apparently large and powerful, and the two Mohammedans setting to work with great solemnity, and a commendable hush coming over the assembled company, I expected a musical treat. The performers began by tuning up with great care; but the tuning continued so long that I began to wonder how soon the real music would begin. Just then

the musicians ceased, and I found that the apparent tuning was the actual performance and that it was all over. The audience appeared to be pleased with what they heard.

For the more popular kind of music you must go to the native band, which is the universal adjunct to every sort of entertainment, great or small. The members of the band are unwearied in their exertions on small drums and shrill pipes. The tune, which never seems to vary whatever the occasion, consists of almost as few notes as the song of an Indian bird, and it is played over and over again and no one grows weary of it. Even the performers play it for the thousandth time with almost as much enthusiasm as when they first began. When they have played far into the night, and fall asleep from sheer exhaustion, they wake up in the morning to begin again.

Though native instruments and the method of playing them does not usually appeal to the English ear, except for condemnation, it must also be said that Indians in general assert that they do not recognise any particular beauty in English melodies; and the wealth of sound of a full band, performing the composition of some great master, only suggests to the Eastern mind a confused medley of meaningless noise. At the weddings of wealthy men who wish to make a special display, there sometimes appears what they call a "Europe" band, which consists of Indian performers, dressed in cast-off uniforms and with Western instruments,

on which they play what are meant to be English popular airs. But there is usually the old-fashioned band also in attendance, and there is no question as to which band the guests really cared to listen.

The truth appears to lie in the fact that the two nations are looking for different effects in music. Europeans value the melody, and the harmony which enriches it. Easterns care little for the melody, dislike the harmony, but think everything of the time. It is the unvaried repetition of the same meagre tune, repeated over and over again with apparently wearisome monotony, which is the attractive feature. And the amount of pleasure to be found in listening to any musical exercise is proportionate to the skill of the performer in beating out his even measure on drum, or pipe, with unwearied pertinacity.

Sir George Clarke, Governor of Bombay, at a meeting of an Indian Choral Society in Poona, in August 1911, in sketching the diverse developments of Eastern and Western music, suggested that the tones of the instruments in vogue had affected the art of singing, and that the falsetto style, common amongst Indians, is in imitation of the shrillness of their reed instruments, while the fuller voice, cultivated in Europe, follows the development of the ampler harmonies of Western instruments. Each style of music represents a cultivation of certain qualities with a neglect of others. The ultimate result of intelligent study should be the combination of the great qualities of both into a

richer music than either East or West has known hitherto. Sir George Clarke went on to say that, before Indian music could develop or become widely known, it must be reduced to some intelligible method of writing. Progress in this direction seems rather slow at present, and Indian music is really in the position of an illiterate struggling against a highly educated competitor.

Some attempt has been made to adapt Indian tunes to the translations of English hymns, but without signal success. Also, Indian Christian converts do not encourage the attempt. They say that the few popular native tunes are so suggestive of the indecent songs to which they are generally sung, that it is impossible to use them safely. English popular melodies which some people, especially dissenters, have adapted for religious use have no associations of this kind. The only doubtful point in their adaptation is the risk of introducing an element of comedy.

Christian Indians get to like the tunes usually associated with the English hymns which have been translated into their vernacular, and they sing them with spirit. Indian choir-boys often give sufficient promise to indicate that, if they could be given the skilled training which is generally lacking, they would not fall behind their English brothers in sweetness of voice and delicacy of expression.

CHAPTER XV

INDIAN MEALS

Stones for grinding grain. Exclusively women's work. Elaborate inspection of the grain. Food a matter of much interest. The meals of a Hindu. Difference between Indian and English custom. Even beggars fastidious. Refinement of native dishes. What the daily bread is like. Hindu caution after the bath.

In the last chapter we spoke of the women singing when they are grinding at the mill. The grinding-stones of their handmills are of various sizes. The smaller ones are rather more than a foot in diameter, and can be worked by one person. The lower millstone is let into the ground. The upper one has an upright wooden handle stuck into it near the edge. The grinder sits on the ground close to the stones, and grasping the handle causes the upper stone to revolve vigorously. The larger stones have two handles, and then two women work together. They often go on grinding for some hours, generally beginning in the early morning while it is still cool. By preference they only grind what is required for the day's use, because the freshly-ground flour is thought to make the best bread. But in the case of schools,

or the large composite families of prosperous Hindus, a large quantity of flour is needed daily.

The custom of grinding the grain at home is almost universal, because of the adulteration of flour sold ready ground. There are numbers of working women whose sole occupation is that of grinding at various people's houses, and though it is hard work, they earn in return what is to them a pretty good living. It is curious that men apparently never lend a hand in this department, even if the wife is poor and sickly, and sorely in need of help. It appears to be regarded as such an absolutely feminine employment, that a man would be disgraced if he put his hand to the mill at all. Even Christians have not quite succeeded in shaking off this idea.

Careful housewives go over all the grain minutely before it is ground, so as to make quite sure that no bit of husk, or defective grain, finds its way into the mill. This is a long and troublesome process. Watching a Christian woman engaged in this occupation, I said something to her husband with reference to its being rather a toil. "I always have the grain prepared in this way," he said cheerfully. "Do you never help your wife?" I asked. "No," he smilingly answered, "but our little girl does."

Ever since the earth began to be inhabited by man and woman, food has been a delicate subject to deal with, and probably the larger number of domestic quarrels find their origin in this depart-

ment of the household. In India, certainly, food is a subject of prominent importance in the minds of the people of the country. Well-to-do Hindus find their chief interest and pleasure in the two big meals of the day. Very few practise any real asceticism concerning food. An orthodox Hindu does not break his fast until he has taken his bath and worshipped his household gods, so that he is habitually fasting till nearly noon. But those who have been always accustomed to this say that it causes them no inconvenience. It must also be remembered that their evening meal is nearly always very late. If guests are expected, and the preparations more elaborate than usual in consequence, the meal may be delayed till ten o'clock or later.

But at these two principal meals the Indian, if he can afford it, eats a large quantity. It is not merely that his appetite should be satisfied, but if the meal is to be regarded as a satisfactory one there must be the physical sensation of repletion, and the diner does not need to eat again for several hours. Nevertheless he nibbles odds and ends of spices and fruits and sweets a good deal in the course of the day. The custom of early tea, with some accompaniment, has become general with Indians who have got a little familiar with English ways.

Easterns are astonished at the frequency of English meals, under the idea apparently that we eat to repletion three or four times a day, instead

of only twice as they do. The breakfast bell rang when two or three young Indian students were talking in the verandah, and they asked if they might come and see our table spread for the meal. We gladly assented, and explained the use and nature of the things set upon it. Fortunately it was not a beef day, and they seemed relieved to find that there was nothing terrible on view. But they expressed great surprise at what appeared to them the small amount of food provided, and we were able to point out the difference between English and Indian customs in this respect, and that though our number of meals daily is greater, we eat less than they do on each occasion.

A very large number of Indians, both Christian and heathen, live on poor fare and go to bed hungry. This is from necessity, not from choice. The poorest man is particular in his degree as to what he eats, more especially as to the manner in which his food has been prepared. Even the beggar off the road will unblushingly and loudly grumble if the fare at a feast to which he has been invited by some wealthy man is not exactly to his mind. The children of mission schools, many of whom have come out of lives of real privation, are sometimes very critical about their meals, and more especially as to how it has been cooked, and they will leave a good supper uneaten and go hungry to bed because of some trifling defect in the manner of its preparation.

Most Indian women have been taught how to

cook from early childhood, and many of them are experts and take much pleasure in their art. Some of the native dishes take a great deal of care and toil to prepare, and except that their tendency is to be rather too pungent for the English palate, a really first-class Indian dinner is refined in appearance; and in the variety of dishes, provided there are always certain things which can be eaten with pleasure. The varied objects which make up the meal are neatly grouped before each guest, and they are meant to be taken in a certain order, so that the palate will be constantly renovated for the next dish which it is to taste.

Even the ordinary daily bread, in the form in which Indians like to eat it, gives a great deal of trouble to those who have to get it ready. Not only is there the grinding of the flour to be done, but it has next to be made up into thin flat cakes which look something like pancakes, which are then lightly baked on a hot plate, and are eaten at once by preference while hot. The preparation and baking of these means that the women of the household have been busy in the kitchen from an early hour, especially in Christian schools, where the children's day begins earlier than in most Hindu households. Hindu schools and colleges commence work very late in the day, because of the necessity of getting the bathing and feeding over first.

Even the most orthodox Hindus have now no scruples about touching Christians, except after

they have taken their bath, but previous to their meal. Having occasion to consult a Brahmin pleader rather frequently concerning the purchase of some land, he always made a point of shaking hands rather effusively, with an eye to business. But I called one morning when he had just emerged from his bath, and he was then careful to keep at a safe distance, because contact would have involved the necessity of bathing again before he took his food, in order to get rid of the ceremonial pollution.

CHAPTER XVI

HINDU PHILOSOPHY

The barrenness of Hinduism. *The Golden Threshold;* its authoress—her poetry; the four kinds of religion; her motherly instincts; her letters; her father; her search for beauty; her portrait. Rarity of happy Hindu faces. The picture of "Jerome."

PEOPLE sometimes say, when asking about Hinduism, "Surely if the idolatry, and folly, and indecency, which we know exists in the religion as it now is could be cleared away, we should find remaining some deep philosophic thoughts and mystical poetical fancies which we might admire?"

The reply to this question is that, if Hinduism was subjected to this purging process, what would be left would be practically nothing at all. This can be strikingly illustrated in the following way.

An Indian lady, Mrs Sarojini Naidu, has published a little volume of poems called *The Golden Threshold.* There is an introduction to the book by Mr Arthur Symons, giving a few particulars of the life of the authoress. She is apparently a thoroughgoing Hindu, although one of sufficient independence of character to marry another Hindu who was not a Brahmin like herself, and on that

account meeting with obloquy from her own people. She is evidently a highly cultivated lady, knowing English perfectly. But though she has lived in England, and travelled much, there is nothing to indicate that she has been touched in any way by Christianity. She has had, therefore, only Hinduism from which to get poetic thoughts connected with religion. She is evidently a true poet, and if there had been anything in the religion capable of suggesting poetic ideas she would have certainly found it. She has undoubtedly a mind of great refinement, so that all that is otherwise in connection with Hinduism has to be eliminated from the field in which she could gather poetic thought. What, then, is the result? While there is a distinct charm in the rhythm of her verses, their utter emptiness makes them of no real value. The only poem, curiously enough, in which a deeper note is struck is when she describes the four kinds of religion which flourish under the kindly rule of H.H. the Nizam of Hyderabad: the Mohammedan, the Hindu, the Parsee, and the Christian. The verse is as follows:—

"The votaries of the Prophet's faith,
Of whom you are the crown and chief;
And they who bear on Vedic brows
Their mystic symbols of belief;
And they who worshipping the sun,
Fled o'er the old Iranian sea;
And they who bow to Him who trod
The midnight waves of Galilee."

Each religion is happily touched with a delicate

hand. To get a suitable idea concerning each into a couple of lines of real poetry shows a gifted mind, and the two last lines are specially happy. (The capital letter in the pronoun is so printed in the book.) Her mind coming thus into brief contact with higher and truer things, she rises in the concluding verse to a kind of benediction on this beneficent Mohammedan ruler, which almost approaches the nature of a prayer :—

"God give you joy, God give you grace,
To shield the truth and smite the wrong,
To honour Virtue, Valour, Worth,
To cherish faith and foster song.
Your name within a nation's prayer,
Your music on a nation's tongue."

The only other poem which rises above the mere commonplace is that in which Queen Gulnaar expresses the unsatisfied condition of her heart because she has no rival to her beauty, and with none to envy, life has no savour. Although seven beautiful brides are sent for and brought before her, she remains without a rival. Finally, with delight, she finds what she sought for in her own little two-year-old daughter. But it was not her religion which supplied the poetess with this pretty fancy. It arose out of her own motherly instincts, which amongst Easterns are charmingly dominant.

There are in the Introduction some extracts from Mrs Naidu's letters which show that if there was anyone who might have been expected to discover anything beautiful in Hinduism, or

suggestive of true philosophy, or capable of being idealised in any way, she was the person who would have done so. She says herself: "My ancestors for thousands of years have been lovers of the forest and mountain caves, great dreamers, great scholars, great ascetics. My father is a dreamer himself, a great dreamer. . . . I suppose in the whole of India there are few men whose learning is greater than his. . . . He holds huge courts every day in his garden, of the learned men of all religions. Rajahs and beggars and saints, and downright villains all delightfully mixed up. And then his alchemy! . . . But this alchemy is only the material counterpart of a poet's craving for beauty, the eternal beauty. . . . What in my father is the genius of curiosity, is in me the desire for beauty."

She is described as being the embodiment of the wisdom of the East, her intellectual development such as to make her a wise counsellor, combined with "passionate tranquillity of mind."

Yet with this long ancestry of dreamers, and her own intellectual capacity, and her poetic craving to find beauty, which even Nature did not satisfy (because what is Nature without Nature's God?), she obviously finds Hinduism completely barren of what she was yearning for, and apparently not having searched for it anywhere else except in Nature, she never comes at it at all. She appears to have been struck by something in the faces of the monks that she saw in

Italy, and she "at one moment longs to attain to their peace by renunciation." But as the secret of their peace was not known to her, it only makes her long for Nirvana, or final nothingness.

Her portrait at the beginning of the book represents a touching type of face which one meets with not unfrequently in India. The expression is dull and lifeless. There is none of the light which shines out of the face of a Christian Indian. But there is at the same time an expression of wistful longing for that hidden treasure which Hinduism could not give her, even when purged of its defilements. The result of which is, that her poetic mind has had to waste itself upon such themes as nightfall at Hyderabad, or the alabaster box in which she treasures her spices, or the bride weeping because her lord is dead.

It is no exaggeration to say that a really happy-looking Hindu is a rare sight, even when on pleasure bent. Childhood in the Hindu world has its flashes of fun, but except in the passing excitement of some romping game, the faces of the children are usually as dull as those of their elders. Two Hindu boys were looking at the picture in the story-book of "Jerome, the Brahmin boy," in which the photographs taken on his first arrival is reproduced, showing his Hindu pigtail, and the paint marks on his forehead, and his sacred thread. Contrasted with this is the photo-

graph taken soon after his baptism. I do not suppose that the boys understood the full significance of the pictures, and this made the comment of one of them the more valuable. "There is a great difference," he said, "between these two pictures. In the first the boy has a very bad face. But in the other picture it is very good." An English boy, writing in a letter on the subject of the same picture, says of Jerome as a Christian, "He looks twice as happy as when he was a heathen."

CHAPTER XVII

HINDUS AND RELIGION

Irreverence in Hindu temples. Robbing the god. Burial of gods. Justice in native states. Giving the title of "god" to people. The god's relations. Hindu conception of god; of prayer. Nominal Hindus. The old army pensioner. The "thread" ceremony.

WHATEVER the Hindu conception of a god may be, their behaviour in their temples shows that it is something entirely different to the ideas which a Christian associates with the name of God. The greatest irreverence, from our point of view of what irreverence means, is continually going on in a Hindu temple in the presence of the idol, to which homage is done as to a god, and which is the object of a good deal of ceremonial attention from the person whose business it is to pay it. Talking loudly, and laughing and joking, children romping about; all this is evidently not felt to be out of place in the temple, because it goes on habitually, and apparently unrebuked. Card-playing is constantly carried on in those larger temples in which there is a space in front of the idol, and evidently nobody objects. Indians are great card-players, and they play with a

persistency and absorbed interest such as the most inveterate bridge-player could scarcely emulate. They often play for the greater part of the day and half the night, and generally for stakes of some sort, however small.

Nor does even robbing the god involve the idea that the god has power to take revenge, because some of the village boys have told me, as a huge joke, of their exploits in robbing their idol of the offerings made to it. People bring small gifts of money, or fruit, or sweetmeats, and deposit them near the idol. These are the recognised perquisites of the custodian of the temple. But in the case of a village temple this official is often also engaged in secular business, so that the boys watch their opportunity and, in his absence, appropriate the offering before he returns.

Apparently burial in a river is a seemly way of disposing of a god. A man was anxious to sell us a plot of land in a certain village, but there was on it a very primitive temple, fenced in with a few sticks and stones. Within this enclosure were several shapeless stone gods, painted with vermilion. We said that if we bought the site the temple would have to be removed first. The man replied that there would be no difficulty about that, because the gods could be buried in the river. The god is then supposed to leave the stone and pass out into the sacred stream. The mud figures of the god *Gunpatti*, which people annually enshrine

in their houses for ten days, are then taken in procession to the river and placed in the water, where, of course, they quickly dissolve.

That even the word *God* has for Hindus an entirely different significance to that which it has for us, indicates how hopelessly misleading our theological expressions may be in the mouths of English-speaking Hindus. A small party of Hindus called at the Mission bungalow to make a request on behalf of a friend who lived in one of the native states. They affirmed that it was an impossibility to get justice in a law-court in one of these states, except through the intervention of the British Resident. They therefore asked me for a letter of introduction to this official, with a request that justice might be done them. The fact that I did not know the Resident, or the applicant, or any of the facts of the case did not appear to them to be an obstacle to my granting them their petition.

So hoping to attain their end by ingratiating themselves with me, they began by adopting the methods which presumably are found to be efficacious amongst Easterns. After profound salaams on all sides, they refused to sit on the chairs which I offered them, but chose humbler seats instead as a tribute to my own greatness. Flattery was the next process, and after descanting on my accomplishments the chief spokesman finished up by saying, "In fact I may say you are *god*." When I pointed out the monstrosity of Hindu teaching which could possibly allow the word to be applied

to any human being, the Hindu explained that anyone whom you hold in estimation may be called god.

Looking at the large framed photograph of the Indian editor, Mr Tilak, who was deported out of the country for several years on account of the seditious nature of his newspaper, the owner of the photograph said to me, "He is a very good man; in fact he is our god."

A young student sat talking till dusk began to fall. The interval between light and darkness is brief in tropical India. The student got up and said he must hasten home. I asked him if he was afraid of the dark. He said, "No, my god takes care of me." I asked him which of his many gods would do this. He said, "Very likely Mahadeva." I asked him where all the millions of gods lived. He said, "In heaven." I asked if they all got on happily together. He said, "Of course." But then he added, "There is only one real god; the others may, as it were, be regarded as his relations"—which was a novel explanation of Hindu mythology.

Though the ordinary Hindu conception of the characteristics of a god does not include holiness, the sort of characteristic which may be looked for can be illustrated by a question which an intelligent Hindu lad asked me when I was showing him the church. "And what *battles* did your Christ fight?" said the boy. His visit to the church was apparently his first contact with Christianity, and

he listened with respectful attention as I told him of the Son of God coming as the Prince of Peace.

Asking an intelligent Brahmin convert what is the Hindu conception of prayer, he replied that with them its object is entirely a selfish one. A Hindu prays for his own worldly prosperity—that his crops may be good, that his business may succeed, that his children may marry well and become rich. Asking the same informant whether Hindus pray for others, he laughed and said, "No, never; except for the members of their own family."

The number of Hindus who are only nominal adherents is probably much greater than is generally supposed, because many of them still retain the outward marks of a religion in which they have ceased to believe. Most of these have not become atheists, but they are feeling after a true God, and those who are in earnest in their search come as near to Him as their imperfect knowledge allows.

An old Brahmin came into the verandah of the Mission bungalow, and sitting down, said very seriously, "Now tell me about your Christ." He was an army pensioner with two medals. He was seventy-five years of age, which is considered very old for an Indian. His only knowledge of Christianity had been gathered up in a vague way from the few Christians he had rubbed up against in the course of military wanderings, including a few

missionaries. Yet even the amount of contact had been a help to him. Hindus sometimes are drawn towards Christianity by contact with even rather nominal Christians.

I asked the old Brahmin if he ever went to the village temple. "There is no temple," he replied rather fiercely. On my assurance that he was mistaken, he said: "Then if there is one, I have never seen it. I go to no temple. I pray to God in heaven." "The *one* God," he added with emphasis. Yet he had the usual red paint marks neatly inscribed on his forehead, and his Brahmin's thread, like a long skein of cotton, was worn sash-like next his skin, but just peeping out a little at the neck for the people to see. Anyone meeting him would have taken him for a most uncompromising and orthodox Hindu.[1]

After I had explained to another Brahmin the meaning of baptism, and that no one is a Christian until he is baptized, the Brahmin said: "Baptism seems very similar to our *thread* ceremony. Till a boy has received his thread he is not permitted to read the sacred scriptures or to take part in religious functions. He may be the son of Hindu parents, but he does not become a real Hindu until he has been invested with the thread."

I asked what then was the condition of those castes who are not entitled to wear the thread. He said that there was no ceremony of initiation

[1] His portrait is to be found opposite p. 23, in *Thirty-Four Years in Poona City.*

for them, and so that they remained outside. I replied that, if this was so, it was very hard that the large majority of Indians should be left out in the cold. He agreed, and said that this undoubtedly was one of the weak points in their religion.

CHAPTER XVIII

RELIGIOUS PHASES IN INDIA

Hindus and Roman Catholicism. Parsees and Christianity. Their works of charity. Persian visitors. Religious controversy. Mr Hole's pictures. Hindu family quarrels. Indian repartee. Appreciation of the dignity of labour.

ENGLISH-SPEAKING Hindus, who are often eager to talk about religious matters, are inclined to take up the cudgels in favour of Protestantism, as compared with Roman Catholicism. But meeting an intelligent Brahmin in a train in the Mysore State, he did just the reverse, showing an unusual knowledge of ecclesiastical affairs. "Do you know how the Pope is elected?" he asked of an old engine-driver who happened to be a fellow-traveller, who seemed rather embarrassed by such an unlooked-for question from such a source. "It is the most extraordinary thing on earth," the Brahmin went on to say, and he proceeded to describe pretty accurately the process of election.

"Now if the Pope was to come to St Paul's Cathedral, would your Archbishop of Canterbury receive him with due respect as the greatest dignitary on earth?" asked the Brahmin.

I said that the circumstances were not very

likely to occur, but that if they did, I had no doubt the Pope would be received with the respect due to his office.

"And if your Archbishop went to Italy, would he stay with the Pope?" said the Brahmin.

I replied that I did not think it likely that he would get an invitation, but that if he did, he would probably accept it. The Brahmin at times made use of semi-profane expressions when talking English. "Good Lord! what a crowd," he said, putting his head into the window of a carriage when we were changing at a junction. But in spite of his knowledge of ecclesiastical affairs, he called on the Hindu god *Rama* when settling down for the night.

Meeting a Parsee, who having been educated at a Roman Catholic school knew something of Christianity, I asked him how it was that this knowledge had borne no practical fruit. His reply was that when in Christian colleges attendance at a religious class is compulsory, it makes the heathen boys hate Christianity.

Very few Parsees have become Christians. I asked another Parsee the cause of this. He said that their religion was so pure that they did not need to seek a better, and that they only looked upon light as a symbol of God. But when the electric light was turned on in the railway carriage where we were sitting, another old Parsee, looking up at it, put his hands together and touched his forehead, after the manner of a Hindu saluting an idol.

The real secret of their want of interest in Christianity probably lies in the fact that they are the successful business people of India, and their minds being much engrossed in worldly affairs there is little room left for religious thought. Some of the richest people in India are to be found amongst them. You seldom see a poor-looking Parsee, partly perhaps because they have the reputation of being very charitable towards their own people, and so they will not suffer one of their number to feel the pinch of real poverty. They are also lavish in their gifts for public purposes, although their act would have more grace if the name of the donor was less prominent.

One day two Persian ladies came to see the village church, with an English lady as their companion. The latter said that one of the Persians was a big personage, and did not wish her name to be known. They had noticed the boys playing about as they were passing by, and, attracted by their faces, came in. On entering the church, the chief Persian lady seeing the embroidered picture of the Crucifixion, genuflected, and sending a little boy of hers to put some money on the altar, she told him to kiss it and return. On leaving, she asked that two candles should be burnt for her on the altar the next Sunday.

The effect that the church has upon visitors has been described already, and how the din of controversy dies down within its walls. In discussing theology with people of an entirely different

religion to one's own, it is almost inevitable that the conversation should gradually become controversial; and when it reaches that stage, all power for good in the intercourse is at an end. The proximity of the church can then be turned to good account. "Would you like to see the church?" is a question which nearly always draws out a ready assent, and the pending risk is averted.

Many of Mr Hole's beautiful pictures illustrating the Life of our Lord are framed and hanging round the walls of the church, something after the fashion of the Stations of the Cross. In a church which Hindus often frequent the Stations are not suitable, not merely because they only represent the suffering side of our Lord's life, but because they leave Him dead and buried. A selection from Mr Hole's pictures, from the Annunciation to the Ascension, enables us to take a Hindu round the church and tell him our Lord's life delightfully in picture story. The best testimonial to the fidelity and correctness of detail in these pictures is that they commend themselves entirely to the Eastern mind. Even quite young Indian boys will turn away from large and gay cartoons supposed to illustrate correctly some Scripture subject, and will eagerly study its smaller and more sober counterpart, often pointing out with much discrimination wherein the large cartoon errs, and the particular points in which the smaller painting excels.

A young Hindu, who began by being very controversial, after visiting the church and express-

ing extreme pleasure at what he saw there, finished up by saying as he went away: "You Christians believe in your religion. We Hindus don't believe in ours, and so we are all divided up."

I asked one of our visitors what work he was doing. He said that as he had not been able to qualify for Government service, he was not doing any work. It transpired that he possessed some land, and I asked why he did not occupy himself usefully by cultivating it. He replied that he had quarrelled with all his relations, and so there was no one to help him in its cultivation. As he was married, I said that in the north of England a farmer and his wife were quite capable of cultivating a small plot like his, without relations at their elbow. He said that in India this would be impossible.

As it appeared that he had not been on good terms with his relations for some years, I said that Hindus were habitually quarrelling and refusing to forgive, but that a true religion would teach the sin of remaining for long periods at enmity with others. He answered that this was one of the weak spots in their religion; that India needed reform in its methods of trade and other matters; that when it had been reformed its religion would improve.

I replied that that was beginning at the wrong end, and that before an effectual reform of morals could take place there must be the foundation of a true religion.

"Then is Hinduism not the true religion?" he asked.

On my replying in the negative, he said: "If I had time I would prove to you that it is, only unfortunately my brother will be home presently and I must go to meet him." And he went away.

Indians, nowadays, are rather inclined to back out when it comes to solid argument, but they are often clever in rapid repartee and in scoring a point quickly. A Hindu boy having been rude and troublesome, I said that he must not come again for pictures for three months, and that if he came I should not give him any. "Not if I come on the King's Coronation Day?" (which was close at hand) he asked promptly. And I was obliged to smile and say that if he came on that day it would be all right.

Indians are beginning to understand something of what is meant by the dignity of labour, although they are slow in making personal application of the lesson. I was pointing out to a middle-aged visitor the Boys' Home in the distance, on the other side of the compound. Looking across, he caught sight of one of the Sisters carrying a pail of water for the garden. "Why, the Sister is working!" he said with eager astonishment and approval. "That is what we need to learn to do in India, instead of sitting about talking or sleeping."

CHAPTER XIX

GAMES IN INDIA

Cricket and football. Use of English cricket terms. Each game has its season. Marbles. The Indian method. Spinning-tops. Splitting your opponent's top. Kite-flying. Battles in the air. Final result. *Itte-dhandu;* how played. The Indian "Tom Tiddler's ground."

INDIAN children are fond of games, and many Indians, until quite advanced in life, continue to play games of a nature which are usually associated with childhood. Cricket has become widely popular in all the larger schools and colleges, and football also, but to a less degree. Christian boys of all ages play these two games everywhere with great zest, and the Hindu boys in their neighbourhood, stimulated by the sight, follow their example to some extent. But they are hindered by the scarcity of the necessary apparatus, which costs more than most Indian boys can possibly afford. If schools and colleges in England would systematically send their cast-off gear for games, carriage paid, to foreign missions they would do a good work in helping to keep young lives in wholesome and happy occupation. Even an old tennis ball is received

as a real treasure by an Indian boy, and any number of balls would be gratefully welcomed by every mission.

In playing cricket it is almost a matter of necessity that the English expressions connected with the game should be used, even by those who know no other English. Out in a village, where English is never spoken, it sounds curious suddenly to hear from the cricket field, "How's that?" pronounced sharply and clearly; and then the prompt and equally incisive reply, "Not out." Wonderful to say, the decisions of the umpires are accepted with tolerable readiness, except when they are flagrantly contrary to fact, as they sometimes are. A few of the politically disaffected students have tried to boycott the game as a foreign importation, but they have not met with much success.

There is a proper season for all the purely Indian games, and to play any of them out of season is almost as great an enormity as to shoot a partridge in England before the 1st of September. If you ask an Indian boy if he has been playing a certain game, and if it happens not to be in season, he will look at you with an air of pained surprise, and briefly saying "No," he will change the subject.

Indians of almost any age play marbles, and there are many divers ways of doing this, the rules of which are clearly established by an unwritten tradition and are strictly adhered to. If a disputed

point arises when a company of boys are playing, an appeal to a senior bystander is always conclusive. Games between experts are watched with interest by quite a number of lookers-on, of every age. The Indian method of shooting a marble is to use the middle finger of the right hand as a sort of catapult. The marble is held with the left hand against this finger, and bending it back, it is suddenly let go. The effect of this is to volley the marble with great force and accuracy. The English boy's method is tame by comparison. The prevailing gambling instinct finds scope in this game, because the marbles are generally kept by the winners, and experts amass great stores. Some schoolboys, with a money-lender's disposition, make a fortune by selling marbles cheap to small and inexperienced boys and then promptly winning them back again.

Spinning tops is an amusement of which the Indian boy never grows weary, and he only leaves off regretfully because its season comes to an end. If he has nothing else to do he will be happy spinning his top, on and off, from morning until nightfall, and naturally grows skilful in the art, although, if he has no companion, it does not admit of much variety. His chief exploit is to scoop up the top while it is still spinning, on to the palm or back of his hand, or on to his arm. But there are exciting contests, when one boy endeavours to spin his top with all his force on to the revolving top of an opponent, because if

successfully accomplished the defeated top splits. A scarred veteran sometimes becomes quite an honoured hero from the number of its victims.

Some of the tops are of the roughest description, made by the village carpenter. More finished ones can be bought in the native bazaar for a farthing. But often a hopelessly disreputable-looking top, with an old nail for its spike, has a better record for deeds done than a more showy one bought in a shop. Those that are spun with the view of splitting their opponent often have, instead of a spike, a flattened bit of iron like a little chisel, which the boys sharpen on a stone, and with these they do great execution. Sometimes somebody's foot is seriously wounded in case of a miss-fire. Now and then, for a change, a boy will play with a whip-top.

Kite-flying amongst Indians is an exciting sport, quite different to the tame amusement of merely seeing how high a kite will go. The Indian kites are nearly always quite small, made of thin coloured paper pasted on to a frame of very slender wooden splints. The better kites are made of paper of several different colours tastefully combined, and often decorated with gold. Strong thread is used, of which the enthusiastic flyer has a large store on a wooden roller, which he intrusts to some small confederate who pays it out or takes it in as required, and is proud to be allowed to have this share in the sport.

But the real purpose of Indian kite-flying is to

do battle with somebody else's kite up in the air. You have to try and so manœuvre your kite that its thread crosses that of your opponent, who may be stationed quite a long way off and out of sight. He on his part will try and avoid you and get the upper hand himself. In the hands of expert flyers the contest is most exciting. Crowds will gather and watch the result with intense interest. The kites dodge, and rush upwards, and dive downwards, as if they were alive, and the fight often goes on for a long time. The thread is doctored with glass which has been pounded into fine dust and mixed with gum. This gives the thread great cutting capacity, so that if it fairly crosses that of its opponent, by a dexterous sawing movement the thread is cut, and the liberated kite sails away on its own account.

Then follows intense excitement amongst the crowds of onlookers far and near. The kite, without the support of its line, soon begins to flutter downwards. It is an established tradition that it becomes the property of the person into whose hands it falls. The original owner is rarely able to get near enough to secure it. Its zigzag course makes it problematical where it will fall. Generally those who think they are going to get it are disappointed by a final flutter, which takes it out of their reach into another pair of outstretched hands. Not unfrequently nobody gets it, because it is torn to shreds amongst the many hands held up to grasp it.

Some schoolboys spend on kites, during their season, every farthing that comes to them; and kites can be bought from a farthing upwards. They have not a long life, even at the best of times. Frequently they get torn by the wind on their first journey heavenwards, and a torn kite can rarely be repaired to much purpose. Flying competitions on a large scale, with substantial prizes for the winners, are organised, and attract crowds of spectators. The competitors are for the most part men, some being of mature age. It is a wholesome and entirely harmless form of amusement, except for the betting which takes place at the big contests.

There is a fine game called *itte-dhandu*, after the names of the two pieces of wood with which it is played. It is a little like tip-cat. The *itte* is a rounded bit of wood 2½ inches long and perhaps an inch in diameter. Sometimes the ends are made to taper, but experts say that this is not correct. The *dhandu* is a stick of similar diameter and about 15 inches long. It is a most exciting game, with an elaborate code of unwritten rules. It can be played by any number of persons from two onwards. The whole field is kept in constant occupation, movement, and excitement. I have in vain tried to get some one to commit the rules to paper. While the game is in season there is no anxiety about how to provide for the wholesome amusement of schoolboys, because they play it in every vacant interval, from early morning till they

go tired and happy to bed. But directly the proper season has ended, the game is dropped till the next year. One of its many advantages is that almost any jungle will provide wood from which the *itte* and the *dhandu* are easily shaped with a pocket knife.

A game, not unlike "Tom Tiddler's ground," is very popular, chiefly on moonlight nights, amongst men and boys. It is often played in the streets of cities when traffic has ceased. The ground is divided into squares, either by scraping boundaries in the dust, which lies thick in the streets of a native city; or else at night by pouring water along the lines, which makes a very conspicuous mark on the dusty surface in the vivid moonlight of the East. This childish game is played with great delight by people whom you might think were much too old for such amusement, and it nearly always forms part of the programme of any village festival.

CHAPTER XX

INDIAN WRESTLERS

Wrestling. Village gymnasiums. Wrestling contests. The prizes. Rustic festivals. Modern novelties. Mineral waters. Ice cream. Incandescent lights. The music. Absence of merriment. The dull crowd. Return of the victor. National characteristics apparent when playing games.

WRESTLING is the chief indigenous athletic exercise of India. Nearly every village has its band of wrestlers and its gymnasium. The latter is often a substantial house as village houses go, much decorated with wall paintings inside and out. Besides the wrestling-pit, with its thick layer of soft earth, it often contains Indian clubs, large stones with which the young men exercise their muscles after the manner of dumb-bells, the post round which they twist and twirl to develop their arms and legs, and the drums which they beat in the temple and elsewhere on festivals.

Every village of importance has its annual wrestling day, to which people come from many miles round. Prizes are given from a fund subscribed by the villagers. It is a point of honour that no one competes in his own village, so that all

the prizes may go to outsiders. The wrestling is conducted with much decorum, in accordance with exact and well-recognised rules. The decision of the referee appears to be nearly always accepted without dispute; or if ever there is a difference of opinion, the arbitration of one or two of the elders amongst the villagers is generally sufficient. If arbitration fails, a free fight is the only way of settling the matter; but such incidents are rare.

The prize is generally a turban, and however many turbans a man already possesses he likes to add to their number. Sometimes there is a good deal of very audible grumbling if the quality of the turban is thought to be defective. Now and then important contests between champions in the world of wrestlers are held in cities like Poona, and there is a charge for admission, and the prizes are of value, gold and silver rings and sums of money. Wrestlers train carefully when they are preparing for a contest, according to their own ideas of training, and they drink a great deal of milk. The best side of Indian village life is to be found in this sport, and as it is one of the few things which is not tainted by idolatry, I could always accept with pleasure an invitation to the gymnasium, or to be present on the annual sports day.

In our village little dinner-parties take place in the houses (or, rather, outside the houses) of the principal farmers, the evening before the annual wrestling competition. Feasts are nearly always

THE YERANDAWANA VILLAGE WRESTLERS OPPOSITE THEIR GYMNASIUM.

[*To face p.* 138.

held in the open air, partly because most of the houses are so small that there is not room inside to seat the guests; and also because low-caste people, who would not be allowed to come indoors, can be fed in the open so long as they sit a little apart from the rest.

Modern novelties are creeping into rustic festivals. Mineral waters of native manufacture, and often astonishingly brilliant in colour, have become a recognised luxury at such times; especially since it has become an understood thing that no breach of caste is involved if you drink your soda-water direct from the bottle. Enclosed in its glass case the liquid could not have been contaminated by any external touch, and there is no need to go so far back in its history as to ask who made the soda-water. The ice-cream man, calling out his wares in what is meant to be English, does a large trade in spite of the microscopic nature of his helpings. Native torches are being supplanted by the powerful incandescent lights of recent times, and one or two of these are hired for the occasion, and are brought out from Poona on the heads of coolies, and burn all night somewhere in the centre of the village. It is an essential element of all Indian festal enjoyments that they should begin in the evening and last all night. Extremes meet, and this is a peculiarity which the Indian social world seems to share, at any rate to a large extent, with the fashionable world in England. Of course a band is also a necessary feature.

I went down into the village one morning, after one of their festal nights, and found most of the villagers seated under the shade of a large tree listening to the band which, usually so indefatigable, was strumming rather feebly after its all-night exertions. It was accompanying a poor, faded-looking woman, who was singing in a peculiar hoarse voice, with a slight attempt at action, and a feeble sort of skip at the end of each stanza. I did not understand what she was singing, but I soon withdrew, because the songs sung at such times are said to be nearly always bristling with improprieties.

But Indians take most of their pleasures sadly, and the curious feature of the whole scene was the complete absence of anything corresponding to fun or merriment. Both the singer and the members of the band were evidently meaning to be funny, but the audience might have been listening to a dull sermon in church, so far as their grave and uninterested faces were concerned. A visitor at any time almost during the festivities would have found them in the same condition. Even when feasting, beyond a certain enjoyment in the process, there is no indication of merriment in the silent meal.

The wrestling competitions began in the late afternoon, when the power of the sun had a little moderated, and lasted until dusk. They were held in a field just outside the village, on newly ploughed land, which affords a soft bed for the

combatants when they fall. Many large and beautiful mango-trees gave welcome shade to the two or three thousand spectators, who formed an immense and deep ring round the arena. Some of the young men of the place, armed with sticks, displayed much energy in keeping the ground clear. The elders of the village arranged the order of proceedings, and who was to compete with who. But in spite of the great assembly taking evident interest in what was going on, and especially in the spirited contests between boy-wrestlers, it was a distinctly dull crowd, and there was little animation in the faces of those who were watching the events closely. The only group in which something approaching to cheerfulness was visible was in the knot of customers gathered round the sellers of fruit and drinks. On the road home the crowd sometimes shows a measure of joviality, and it is always customary to usher victorious wrestlers into their own village with shouts and loud proclamation of what has been accomplished. After a victory in one of the big city contests the hero may even be escorted home with lights and music.

It is in games, perhaps, more than in anything else, that national characteristics make themselves apparent. This is specially noticeable in India when anyone gets injured in sports or cricket, or if he has run an exhausting race. The Englishman hates to be fussed over, says that his injury is nothing, and that he can walk home quite easily,

when perhaps his leg is broken; and he feels dreadfully ashamed of himself if he collapses at the finish of a race. The Indian, on the contrary, makes extraordinary demonstrations over a slight injury; he flings himself on the ground, and is apparently at the point of death. His friends rush for water, and chafe his hands and legs, and they think the Englishman unfeeling if he ventures to say that he thinks the sufferer will soon be better. After these performances have gone on for a sufficient time, the injured man quietly gets up and resumes the game.

Almost invariably, at the end of any race, the winner thinks it necessary to put on the appearance of great exhaustion as long as anyone is looking at him. But when interest is diverted by preparations for the next race, the fit of exhaustion is easily concluded, and the sufferer joins the crowd as if nothing had happened.

CHAPTER XXI

BOOKS IN INDIA

India in fiction. Vernacular prayer books. Indian letters. Indian advertisements. Mistaken method of education. Slang expressions. Swearing. Indians possess few books. Want of respect for books. Cheapness of Christian books. Indian printing and binding.

THERE are a few writers of fiction who depict Indian native life and talk faithfully. But many readers get an entirely false idea of India and its people from certain popular novels, which are supposed to paint a true picture, but in which the description even of cities, and villages, and scenery are often as unlike the reality as the circumstances and conversations. Indian people talk much in the same way as ordinary folk in other parts of the world, except that unseemly allusions are freely admitted into general conversation in a way which would not be tolerated in a Christian country. The absurd, high-flown conversational rhapsodies in the average Anglo-Indian novel are purely imaginary. "Kim's" talk fairly represents the ordinary talk of the Indian, although he was not one himself.

A missionary, newly arrived in the country,

asked whether the Prayer Book, translated into the vernacular, suited the Indian people, or whether its sober language failed to satisfy the Easterns' desire for rhapsody. But the high flights such as he had in mind are only to be found in novels. People often speak of the Prayer Book as if it was a modern compilation of purely Western origin, and they seem to forget that it is teeming with ancient Eastern thought. It is an instance of its Catholicity that it supplies the needs of all nations. When carefully translated, many of the people of the East make more use of it than some good Christians do in England. Even rustic Indians use it intelligently and with great appreciation, and it forms their chief manual of private devotion. Indian children soon learn to follow the various services which it contains with happiness and profit. Many of them have made themselves quite familiar with the whole book from often studying it.

Innumerable examples have been published of the astonishing letters addressed by Indians to Government officials and others. They are astonishing, both in the nature of the requests made and the English in which their wants are expressed. Some people suppose that the examples published cannot be really authentic, or are greatly exaggerated. Those who are familiar with some of the originals know that exaggeration is impossible, because no feigned composition could beat the reality. Here is a letter, copied word for

word, which a Hindu wrote and brought to me, asking me to correct it:—"To Colonel, ——. Sir, my eldest son has been suffering since last year from Morbid heat of skin that is bone fever for which he had Quinine Arsenic and chiretta, but without effect of recovery, he is gradually getting day by day weaker, and we have had 'chit chat' at your quarters for granting to my son an appointment as clerk in your office, please try your best and grant him one, for which act of kindness I shall ever pray for your long life and prosperity. Most probably I shall see you during the Christmas Holidays. An early reply will be greatly oblige, I remain Sir yours faithful and most respectful servant Bulwant."

Indian tradesmen in their advertisements often promise to pray for those who become their customers. Here is a quotation from an English leaflet, put out by a bookbinder in our neighbourhood:—"Rates and charges for different sorts of binding and gold work will be settled by the undersigned and the party and the undersigned will ever pray for him, who will call him up by a Post Card." The comicalities to be found in shop signboards in the English language are endless.

But though comical examples of the misapplication of language have been published to weariness, and the bombastic compositions of educated Indian students held up to ridicule, the fault does not lie with the pupil but with ourselves, who are

ultimately responsible for the subjects which are set him to learn. So long as he is made to read books in antiquated English, he will naturally suppose that the flowery and bombastic language of Addison in the *Spectator*, or of Dr Johnson, is the style which he ought to imitate when he writes a letter. Nor is it possible for him to discriminate, in what is to him a foreign language, between what is antiquated and out of date, and what is mere modern slang, and so he sometimes combines the two styles in his compositions with startling effect.

It would seem to be more rational to give him the best modern authors to study while he is still a learner, and to leave it to him to dive into the recesses of English literature, if he is so inclined, after he has ceased to be a pupil. Students bring their books of selections from English authors to the missionary, and ask him to clear up their difficulties. But a long and involved paragraph, with several obsolete words and obscure satire, is a tangle which it is almost hopeless to unravel satisfactorily, when you are dealing with a language so unlike in construction and modes of expression to that of the learner. Nor are some of the allusions in the selected passages particularly edifying to the Hindu mind, ready to scent evil even where it does not exist. And they tempt him to buy cheap reprints of the literature of the past, in the hope that he will find matter congenial to a mind easily attracted to that which is pernicious.

Indian students are sometimes asked in their examinations to explain out-of-the-way or obsolete expressions which are little better than slang. As a result of this, students when speaking English will introduce some of these expressions into their talk, thinking that by so doing they show their familiarity with the language. When they try to embellish serious sentences in this way the result is sometimes remarkable. They will also repeat words, never heard in polite society, under the idea that they are in common use. Now and then students swear freely, supposing that all Englishmen do so. When taking shelter from the midday sun at a roadside police station—only a little hut a few feet square—I listened to the Mohammedan policeman as he talked to a beggar, who was exhibiting the contents of his bundle in order to show that he had not got any stolen goods. The policeman was talking in Marathi, but presently I noticed that at intervals a short word occurred, which sounded like what is popularly regarded as being essentially the Englishman's oath. I soon discovered that such was really the case, and that the policeman was adorning his talk with the word which he had heard Englishmen use when they wanted to give force to their orders. He was, of course, quite ignorant of its meaning, but it was unfortunate that the only English word which he knew, and which he evidently used constantly, should be of such a nature.

Few Indians possess any number of books, either in their own language or in English. The lesson books they may have used at school or college gradually get dispersed. Even in the houses of educated people little provision in the shape of bookcases is to be found. A recess in the wall may contain a shelf or two on which a few books are placed in disorderly array, but they are seldom read. Even those who read books take little pleasure in their outward appearance, and the binding is to them nothing more than a necessary protection to the book inside it. Some wealthy Indian, following to some extent Western fashions in his house, may have in his reception-room the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and a library edition of Dickens, elaborately bound. But they are rarely opened and only form part of the decorative furniture of the room, and stand a poor chance of notice in competition with the big gramophone which, nowadays, is to be found in many well-to-do Eastern households.

Indians have yet to learn to treat books with the respect which is instinctive amongst people of refinement in most European countries. To see a book rudely treated, or knocked about, is almost as distressing to many people as if it was an object sensitive to pain. But a book in the hands of even a cultivated Indian is almost sure to suffer. If it is a new book, he will open it vigorously, and bend it back as far as it will go, in order to make it open properly. Its broken

back is the permanent memento of the treatment it has received. Even Christian Indians are slow to learn the outward respect due to their religious books. Their prayer books and hymn books, more often than not, soon go to pieces for want of reasonable care, although women are much more careful than men. Want of appreciation of the value of a book may partly arise from the fact that nearly all the books which Christians use have been sold to them under cost price, through the help of societies. Bible societies issue copies of the Scriptures at extraordinarily cheap rates, so that they may come within the reach of everybody, however poor. Vernacular prayer books are generally sold at a cost much below that of their production. This was inevitable in early days when Christians were few in number, and often poor. But it has left the impression that a book is a thing of little value, easily replaced.

A Brahmin seeing a book on India on my table which he thought he would like to have, asked the price. On hearing that it was seven or eight shillings, he lifted up his hands in dismay and said, "The price is prohibitive. Write and tell Messrs Murray & Co."

At one time it was almost impossible to get good printing done in India, although many people professed to be printers. Of late years there has been a great change in this respect, and some of the presses produce beautiful vernacular work, and soon their English printing will leave little

to be desired. Bookbinding also shows sufficient promise to indicate that first-rate results would be forthcoming if there was more demand for it. Some of the more enterprising newspaper proprietors are issuing festal numbers of their publication in imitation of our Christmas numbers, and though they are in substance rather a sad parody of even our own publications in which the true meaning of Christmas often has so little place, the manner of their production is sufficiently artistic to show that India will be quite capable of producing her own real Christmas number when the happy day dawns when she is found demanding it.

CHAPTER XXII

INDIAN PAGEANTS

Processions. Marriage ceremonies. People take little notice. Funeral processions. Military display. Eagerness to see the King. Military ardour of Christian boys. Hindu procession diverted into the Church. Embarrassing result. Problems of worship. Religious dancing. Father Benson's "War-Songs."

IT is commonly imagined that we in India live in a perpetual state of pageant, and that the Indian is constantly occupied with brilliant display and stately processions, and that he cannot be happy without them. In reality, most Indian processions are of a tawdry character, somewhat of the nature of, but not nearly so imposing, as that of an average circus in England. Nor as a rule do these processions excite much interest, except amongst those who are actually taking part in them, and even their interest is often languid.

The chief processions are in connection with marriages, and rich men spend a great deal of money on that part of the ceremonial. Bands, and horses, and carriages, and bands of artificial flowers borne on the heads of women, and surrounding the bridegroom as he rides on

horseback, large fans of peacocks' feathers waving round him to keep off evil influences and imaginary flies, torches at night, now supplanted by modern incandescent lamps carried on men's heads, displays of fireworks, and the exploding of harmless bombs—processions such as these abound in Indian towns, and in a simpler form in villages, at seasons which have been declared propitious for weddings. Some of these cavalcades are attended by a multitude of people whose chief concern in the matter probably centres in the feast which is to follow.

But even the most magnificent procession hardly excites the faintest curiosity amongst the people of the streets along which it passes. The shopkeeper does not rise from the pillows on the floor of his little shop on which he is dozing; the brass-worker or silversmith will scarcely lift up his eyes from his work; the women will hardly come even to their house-door to look; the little boys busy playing marbles down some side street are too much absorbed in their game to run and see the show. This is a curious contrast to the rapidity with which a crowd will gather on the smallest provocation in a European city. Even a hearse, standing at a house-door in England, will draw a very respectable crowd, merely in order to see the door open and the coffin brought out. A funeral procession in India is of much greater possible interest, because most Hindus are carried to the place of burning, or burial, as

the case may be, on a flat bamboo litter with the face visible, so that you have the opportunity of recognising, or not, the face of a friend in the passing corpse. Yet few use the opportunity, and the sight does not appear to excite the slightest curiosity. Nobody bestows any tokens of respect on the funeral procession, and scarcely anybody gives it even a passing glance. This does not apparently arise from superstitious shrinking from the sight of a corpse.

Military display does not impress the ordinary Indian. When a governor drives in state to hold a levee he is attended by a brilliant retinuê, and the Indian soldiers who form the chief part of his bodyguard are picked men, looking magnificent in their superb uniform. This imposing display is meant presumably to impress the native mind with the dignity and authority of the representative of the ruling monarch. But in reality it does not excite admiration, or interest, or any other sentiment. The glittering cavalcade, which would bring out half London to see it if only they had the opportunity, passes on its way, and the chance passers-by hardly pause to look at it. This is not out of disrespect to the powers that be, but merely because they see nothing to interest or admire. The small body of the disaffected, of course, look upon military display as part of the arrogance of the conqueror towards his subjects. The multitudes who thronged the streets of the great cities which the King visited, came together

because they wanted to see the King himself, and they would have been just as pleased, and perhaps even more so, if he had ridden through the streets in solitary majesty without any retinue. Some natives complained that amongst the many English officers in gorgeous uniform it was not always possible to distinguish for certain which was the King.

Not unfrequently large bodies of troops come past the Mission compound in Yerandawana village on their way to the hilly country beyond, which provides an ideal area for military tactics. The boys of the Mission, through education and drill, and contact with Englishmen, are filled with military ardour, and are worked up to a pitch of intense excitement by the sight of guns, and mules, and baggage-waggons, and marching soldiers, and they spend every spare minute by the roadside. But to the Hindu villagers it means nothing at all. Perhaps one or two of the village boys who are attending the day-school will catch a spark of enthusiasm from the Christian boys, and will join them by the roadside; but the majority of the villagers will hardly turn their heads, much less walk ten yards, to see the sight. Religious processions to some sacred place or shrine are sometimes impressive from the enormous number of pilgrims taking part in them. One day a large procession of Hindus from a neighbouring village, on their way to the temple at Yerandawana, passed alongside the Mission compound. They had with

them a god, which they were carrying in a palanquin. One or two boys, seeing me standing at the church door, called out to know whether I had any pictures to give away. I invited them instead to come and see the church, and several boys left following the palanquin and came towards me. The crowd seeing this, and moved with curiosity, did the same, and in a few minutes the greater part of the procession was diverted into the church. The result of this was the unusual sight of the church crammed to the doors with eager Hindus in holiday attire, and it gave an idea of what will be its aspect on some great festival, after the conversion of the village has become an accomplished fact.

The situation, however, soon became embarrassing. The Hindus appeared rather pleased with their surroundings. Some of them had got with them the heavy brass cymbals which they clash as a musical accompaniment in their religious processions. They began to sound their cymbals and to dance in the slow, sedate way, which they do in their temples on festal occasions, or when having an outdoor procession. Meanwhile the directors of the ceremonies had grasped the situation, and setting down the palanquin hurried into church, and expressing their indignation by words and blows, endeavoured to drive out the crowd. But as the church has nineteen large double doors this was no easy matter, because as fast as they were driven out at one door they came in at another.

At length the church was cleared, and the much disorganised procession went on its way. On its return, after an hour or so, a good many Hindus again visited the church, in order to get a better view of it than they had been able to secure amidst the crowd.

The sight of the people, solemnly dancing and clashing their cymbals in the church, set one thinking as to the difficulties and problems which the conversion of the villagers will give rise to. It is purgatory to an Indian to sit still for any length of time. Outdoor preachers have to adapt themselves to a congregation which is continually changing. Very few can keep their attention for ten minutes. An ordinary Evensong, with little variety of posture, is a dreary exercise for a Hindu, and if he comes he seldom sits it out to the end. The Christian Indian gets accustomed to it and learns to appreciate it, but he rejoices in a procession, or in any ceremonial which involves motion. If the solemn dance and clashing of cymbals during the Magnificat could be allowed, the rustic Indian would enjoy Evensong.

Father Benson, in his "War-Songs of the Prince of Peace," thus happily translates the fourth verse of Psalm 150—"Praise Him with timbrels tost in timely dance." And that is what the Christian Indian would delight to do.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE INDIAN CHARACTER

Erroneous notions about India. The Indian nature shallow. The Indian as a student. Unfinished projects. Untidiness. Waste of time. Petty vanity. Quiet obstinacy. How to govern. Training of the Indian boy. Punishment. Patience. Rulers of the "Lawrence" school. Their success. The Declaration at Delhi. Unexpected contradictions of character.

SOME of the perplexities of missionaries in India, and also probably of Civil servants in the Indian Government, arise from preconceived notions about the country and people which are either only partly true, or are altogether erroneous. It takes years of growing experiences before things gradually assume their proper proportions in the mind.

The generally accepted idea that Indians have a depth of intellect which it is almost impossible to fathom, is one of the most fruitful causes of mistakes in government, whether within the comparatively narrow limits of a Mission area, or when dealing with affairs which concern the whole country. An extensive and varied experience amongst Hindus of almost every class and age has led to the conviction that the great depth

which could not be fathomed is really a shallow, and that we should have realised that we touched bottom long ago, except that we continued to try and probe for it in a region which does not exist.

If it is true that the Indian mind is shallow, and with limited capabilities, it explains a great deal which otherwise seems perplexing. Nor will this conviction lead you to think less of the Indian. On the contrary, it makes you like him all the better, because you can appreciate his many good qualities without being disappointed because they do not yield all the fruit which might be desired.

Many instances might be given of the shallowness of the Indian's mind. In his student days he will often slave at his books to an extent almost unparalleled in any other student world. But when he has attained the goal and secured his diploma, which is the summit of his ambition, the number of students who make any further use of the knowledge which they have acquired with so much toil is few indeed. Or, if he has secured a post which would in due course lead on to a position of responsibility and corresponding prosperity, he will often throw up his work and sacrifice all his prospects on account of some trifling rebuke or imaginary slight.

The marks of unfinished projects to be seen all over India point to a want of depth of purpose. Interest and zeal has abated before the work is

complete, or it was entered upon thoughtlessly without having counted the cost. It does not seem to cause the Indian any compunction that an undertaking was begun but never finished. Nor is the partly built house going to ruin because incomplete, or the well useless because it has not been sunk deep enough, an eyesore to him. Even his inveterate want of tidiness indicates a careless mind. Rubbish of all sorts lying around or within his house, even if it be of a most unsavoury nature, so that its presence forces itself upon attention, does not distress him.

Inveterate unpunctuality, and the general absence of a sense of responsibility concerning the value of time, is another indication of shallowness of mind. Days and weeks are allowed to drift away with nothing done, even amongst those who are supposed to be men of business. Petty vanity is also a mark of a shallow nature, and there are few heathen Indians who do not boast about attainments and possessions and exploits, and make unblushing statements which perhaps have not a vestige of truth in them. The reality of Indian affection as far as it goes, but its want of depth, has been already touched upon.

What ought to be firmness of character is apt to take the form of a vein of quiet obstinacy, which is latent in almost all Indians. With many it is not generally aggressive in character, and shows itself in matters of no great importance. It is necessary, for the sake of peace, to allow Indian

servants to do certain things in their own way. You explain how you prefer to have a thing done and you give your reasons, and the butler or gardener will apparently agree, and they will do it for a few days according to your wish; but as soon as they think that you have forgotten, they will return to their own custom. And if you were to tell them twenty times, they would twenty times take the same course.

With Indian children a conflict of opinion is to be avoided if possible, because, even with them, if the spirit of obstinacy is aroused it may easily lead on to serious complications. An Indian lad, if he gets his back up, becomes from the most reasonable of beings the most unreasonable. Arguments and warnings are wasted upon him, and you can only leave him alone and deal with him when he has recovered.

When shallowness of nature has been recognised as being that of the average Indian, it simplifies your relations with him. You take him as he is, and enjoy the many attractive qualities which flourish, up to a certain point, in the shallow soil. It also makes it easier to govern him, supposing you have responsibilities of that nature, if you understand that you must not depend too much on certain qualities which he only possesses in a limited degree. And this is equally true whether your responsibility extends only to one or two individuals, or whether it embraces a wide area and large populations.

With the Indian boy, for instance, firmness and kindness must be judiciously blended. It is no good arguing with him in times of difficulty, or you will stir up that latent spirit of obstinacy. Rules concerning work or conduct must be clearly laid down, and deviations taken notice of at once. Almost all Indians require the stimulus of supervision to keep them up to their work. But many Indian boys are slow in learning the duties of their office, whatever it may be. They must be given time, and the same thing may have to be often patiently explained before it is digested. A word of commendation for good work or conduct may be dropped now and then, but not too often, or it will be taken as an indication that a less amount of exertion will suffice.

The question of punishment should always be very carefully thought out beforehand. But if threatened, and really earned, it is best given. "Letting off" is looked upon as a sign of weakness, and does not stimulate gratitude. Reasonable punishment, given good-temperedly, as the proper due for debt incurred, never produces ill-feeling. But the Indian boy smarts under a sense of injustice, and his case ought always to be carefully weighed, and what he has to say in his defence patiently listened to, and due deference should be shown to his special characteristics as an Eastern and not a European. Also, the infinite variety of character to be found amongst Indian boys should be taken into account.

They must be dealt with, not as a flock, but as individuals.

The old Anglo-Indians of the "Lawrence" school, who were for the most part eminently Christian men, ruled India much on the same lines as if it was a large boys' school. And, when they were not hampered by undue interference from headquarters, they were on the whole signally successful, and were both beloved and feared. Unless the Indian nature changes, and that can only be with the acceptance of Christianity, and even then only up to a certain point, any attempt to govern India on different lines will be a dubious experiment. People whose nature is not very strong are often not unwilling to accept the support of a kindly, but firm hand, to guide them. And as they rarely agree amongst themselves concerning any course of action, they like to have things settled for them, provided that the decision has wisdom and common sense on its side. This of course does not apply to the little knot of discontented political agitators. But they in no way represent the attitude of the people of India. The manner of the declaration of Delhi as the new capital, coming from the lips of a King of whose goodwill they were already assured, was exactly the course of procedure which most of all commends itself to the Indian mind.

There are, however, unexpected contradictions in the Indian character which baffle explanation. In spite of the almost universal moral laxity in the

conversation and personal life of a Hindu, any English lady could travel in perfect safety through the length and breadth of the land, in city or in jungle, with no other attendants than her heathen Indian servants. There are also English parents who have found that an Indian boy is, from a moral point of view, a safer guardian for their young children than the average Indian woman who usually fulfils that office.

CHAPTER XXIV

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY IN INDIA

Discussing religion with Indians. Their illustrations from Nature. Want of applicability. Access to the King of kings. Moral maxims for an ascetic. Misapplication of the word "religion." Observance of caste easy. Caste often broken in private. Brahmin schoolboy asking for water. The mischievous village boy.

PEOPLE with missionary aspirations have hesitated to volunteer for Indian work because they felt that they were not competent to grapple with the acute intellects and subtle philosophy of Indian thinkers. It is commonly said that the acutest intellects in India are to be found amongst the Brahmins of Poona City. A tolerably wide acquaintance amongst them would lead one to say that the would-be missionary's fears are groundless. The real difficulty of controversy with Indians, so far as it may be expedient to embark in it at all, which is doubtful, is that their arguments are often so discursive, their reasoning so childish, their illustrations so comically beside the mark, that it is scarcely possible to deal with them seriously.

They are particularly fond of illustrations drawn from Nature, and they always regard the illustra-

tion as a conclusive answer to an argument. If you point out its want of applicability, they reply by at once giving another illustration equally inapplicable. For instance, the broad-minded modern Indian argues that all religions ultimately lead to God, and so that they are all equally good; and he gives as his illustrative proof, that many rivers starting from a variety of sources eventually empty themselves into the sea. And he looks upon this, not merely as an illustration, but as a clinching argument against which nothing can be said. But if you demur he will put the case in the reverse order, and he will say that just as in Poona City there are many tanks, but the water which supplies them all comes from the great reservoir many miles away, so the various forms of religion found in different countries came originally from the same source, and are therefore identical.

A Hindu, defending the multiplicity of gods, said to me that of course there was only one Supreme Being, but that he was too great to be approached by ordinary mortals, and that it was through the lesser deities that man had access to him. To make this clear, he used the following illustration. He said that if a man had a grievance he could not go direct to the emperor and state his case, but he must begin by approaching the district collector, and ultimately his petition might reach the ears of the emperor. Happily this illustration gave the opportunity to say that in the Kingdom of Christ the poorest outcast, or the little child,

can have direct and immediate access to the King of kings, whose ears are always open to the prayers of all His people.

Moral maxims, such as they are, are often put into the same illustrative form. The following maxims are for the guidance of an ascetic:—

"As the uncomplaining earth suffers injuries and affronts without any sign of resentment, so should the ascetic be unperturbed by any ill-treatment and indignities he may be subjected to.

"Into the serene sky ascend the glad sounds of mirth, the fierce roar of battle, the beating of drums, and the clash of swords; but it retains none of them; the ascetic in the midst of the turmoil of life should, in like manner, retain no impression of the events about him, be they joyous or mournful.

"As the pure flame feeds indiscriminately on all sorts of fuel, the living timber of the forest as well as the refuse of the dung-heap, so ought the ascetic to accept willingly whatever food is given to him, never reflecting on its value, nor whether it is stale or fresh."[1]

The reader will be able to judge for himself how far the application of these illustrations is calculated to help a man in his religious aspirations towards asceticism.

The fact that Hinduism is a religion which still has a great hold upon the majority of the people of India may be partly explained by the shallowness

[1] Oman, *The Ascetics of India*, p. 158.

of the Indian mind, which was referred to in the last chapter. If there had been greater depth of feeling, and keener perception of what the soul needs, the Hindu religion could never have held its ground for so long. In spite of what many writers say about Hinduism permeating every corner of domestic life, which is true in a sense, it does not mean that "religion," as we understand the word, permeates the Indian household. In an article in the *Fortnightly* of September 1909, an educated Hindu, Mr P. Vencatarao by name, writing on the subject, "Why I am not a Christian," after stating amongst other things that "Hinduism has no fundamental dogmas," goes on to say: "Hinduism is much more a matter of social intercourse and domestic life than of religion in the proper sense of the word." And that is perfectly true.

It is a particularly easy religion to follow. The moral code is left undefined, and for the child depends upon the individual characteristics of the members of the household in which he grows up. The only clear rule of life which the Hindu possesses is concerning the observance of caste. That is to say, he must never take food or drink which has been in any way contaminated by the touch of a caste lower than his own, and marriage may only be contracted within the limits of his own caste. This rule he observes strictly, at anyrate in public, from the earliest childhood onwards. But it conveys no moral obligation.

On the contrary, it tends to self-esteem and selfishness. Nor does it often cause any serious inconvenience. Or when it does, as for instance when travelling, the exigences of modern life have brought about a number of small concessions to the strictness of the rule concerning food and drink, so that the inconveniences have been mitigated or removed.

Numbers of Hindus break their caste rules in private. More than once a high-caste visitor in the verandah, when he was alone, has asked me for a drink of water; and there is no breach of caste so heinous as to take water from the hand of a Christian. Now and then a Hindu lad will display such an audacious courage in religious matters that it partakes rather of the nature of a boyish freak. Several big Brahmin lads, most of them being about sixteen or seventeen years old, had been visiting the Mission-house rather frequently and showed a good deal of interest in Christianity. One of them, when sitting in the verandah, suddenly said to one of the Fathers: "Could I have a drink of water?" The Father replied that he would fetch him the water if he wished. The lad said: "Bring it, please"; and when the glass of water was brought, he drunk it in the presence of his companions, and thus deliberately and publicly breaking his caste. Unless he had been prepared to follow his action up in some definite way, it had no particular use; but it was not for us to suggest scruples. It

NIRARI BHOSLE.

[*To face p.* 168.

need scarcely be added that the visits from that particular group of lads ceased, and it was long afterwards that, meeting the perpetrator of this rash act in the road, I asked him what penalties he had had to undergo for what he had done. He denied that any results followed, but the cessation of his visits gave the lie to this assertion.

One of the village boys, who is endowed with a strong spirit of mischief, implored me to cut off his pigtail in order that he might have the fun of seeing his mother's horror when he returned without it. But as he had no present intention of becoming a Christian, and it would have made a row to no purpose, I refused to be an accomplice to his mischief.

CHAPTER XXV

WILD BEASTS IN INDIA

Tigers not often seen. Unlooked-for visits. Appearance of a tiger. The dead panther. Government rewards. Annual return of people killed. The tiger's den. Jackals; their cry. Wolves. So-called "wolf-boys." The Asiatic lion.

WHEN an English boy meets a missionary from India the only thing he wants to know is whether he has ever seen any tigers, and he is disappointed if he gets an answer in the negative. The truth is, that though wild beasts are still numerous they keep out of sight as much as possible. They soon realise that man is their enemy, and ordinarily they give him as wide a berth as possible. When a grandee wants to shoot a tiger the difficulty is to find one, and an elaborate and lengthy campaign has to be organised, and an army of beaters called into requisition in order to gradually bring the tigers within range. A forest officer of long experience, in that jungly region where the mouths of the Ganges open out into the Bay of Bengal, told me that though tigers are known to frequent those parts, he had never seen one.

In the hot weather in India English people sleep

with doors and windows wide open on the ground floor, or in the verandah, or even quite out of doors in their compound, without apprehension. Whereas in England, where there are no wild beasts, and thieves may be supposed to be under control, doors and windows are barred at night as if the house was about to sustain a siege.

But where there are no barriers of sea to prevent wild beasts from wandering wherever they please, unlooked-for visits are possible, even if improbable. Animals are sometimes obliged to abandon their usual haunts in time of drought, when the normal sources of water have dried up, and they wander farther afield and come nearer to the haunts of men than is their wont. Occasionally people are taken by surprise by the advent of a panther, or even a tiger, in a district which they were supposed to have deserted.

One of the Brothers and some of the Mission boys were climbing about the hills in holiday time in the neighbourhood of Kala, a small village twenty miles or so from Poona, and in the heat of the day rested for a while in the shade of a thicket of small trees. Continuing their walk, they were startled on looking back to see a tiger jump out of the thicket in which they had been resting. Tigers rarely come into the open in the middle of the day unless they have been disturbed, and his sudden appearance was soon accounted for when an Englishman, accompanied by some native beaters, emerged. The Englishman fired, and the tiger

gave a terrible roar, as he generally does when wounded, and went back into the thicket. To dislodge him was not an easy task, because a wounded tiger is, of course, a most dangerous beast. But eventually he broke cover again, and the Englishman shot him dead; and the boys had the novel experience of inspecting at close quarters the body of a tiger who, not long before, had been sheltering from the rays of the noonday sun in the same thicket as themselves.

One Sunday a bullock-cart drew up at the Mission-house, containing a large panther which had been shot, some eight or nine miles away, by a Christian who is one amongst the few privileged natives allowed to carry a gun. He was bringing the body in order to exhibit it to the local authority, so that he might claim the Government reward. The skin also fetches a good price. The scent was getting rather strong, so after photographing the successful hunter and his son, standing over the beast in the approved fashion, we were glad to hurry him on. Its claws and teeth were in a very dirty and neglected condition, which may partly account for the great danger of even slight lacerations made by an animal of this kind.

Government sometimes spends as much as £8000 a year on rewards for the destruction of wild beasts and snakes in British India, and the annual return of the number of human beings reported as having been killed by them shows that they are still sufficiently numerous to be a power in

the land. In a recent return this number reached the enormous total of 24,576. But snakes were accountable for 21,827 out of these deaths. In the same year, in the case of 48 people killed by tigers in the Central Provinces, nearly all were the victims of one tigress which had been infesting the jungle for some years. A confirmed man-eater becomes very crafty, and difficult to kill.

There are many hills and dales where wild beasts found a congenial home from which they have gradually retreated in the face of man and civilisation. A den in the hillside, visible from the Mission bungalow at Yerandawana, is still spoken of as the "Tiger's den," and a remote, but probably true tradition lingers of an immense tiger who lived there and who was eventually hunted down and slain by order of the then ruler of the district. At the present day, in the immediate neighbourhood of Yerandawana the only wild creatures left are the fox and the jackal, with an occasional hyena. Jackals visit the outskirts of the village at night to see if there is anything eatable to be picked up, and they sometimes race across the Mission compound in the early morning on their way home. It is to be feared that they visit the Hindu cemetery, where the graves are often so shallow that the bodies are scarcely covered. The low-caste men, whose duty it is to bury stray corpses, do not expend more labour over their task than they can help.

Jackals generally travel in companies at night,

and they utter a most peculiar and rather attractive sharp cry in chorus, which they are commonly said to repeat after exact intervals of time. But solitary jackals are often to be met with. In the mountainous district somewhat farther away wolves are still found, and they do a little damage amongst the flocks of the villages. Some two or three hundred persons are carried off yearly by wolves in British India. The majority of these victims are very young children who have strayed away a little from their parent's hut.

There is a widespread belief in rural India that wolves, instead of devouring these babies, occasionally bring them up amongst their own young ones. It has been questioned whether these stories of "wolf-boys" have any foundation in fact. A schoolmaster, whose evidence was reliable, told me that he had actually seen a boy of this description brought to a mission in North India by people who had found him in the jungle. They led him by a string, as if he had been a wild animal. The Mission accepted the charge, and the boy proved quiet and docile; but he never learnt to speak, nor, in fact, was it possible to teach him anything. He did not join the other boys in their games. When he went to church he sat there quietly, but without any apparent understanding of what it meant. He learnt, however, to smoke, and made signs to indicate that a cigarette would be acceptable; and if one was given him he gave a kind of salute by

way of acknowledgment, which shows that his mind was not quite a blank. He seemed to be about ten years old when the people brought him, but whether he was still alive the schoolmaster did not know.

Even in this case there was no direct evidence to connect the boy with wolves. But the natives have so many stories of the kind that it would seem likely that there is some truth in them. It is not inconceivable that the young wolves might welcome the arrival of the strange child as a new playmate, and that if its life was spared at the first the wolf-boy would, through his human nature, gain a sort of ascendancy over his foster-parents, and they would eventually fear to hurt him, after the fashion of Mowgli in Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book.*

The Asiatic lion is sometimes spoken of slightingly, as if it was a feeble creature and almost extinct. A visit to Kathiawar, in Guzerat, would dispel the idea. In one forest alone, only a few years back, there were said to be a hundred lions, which were the terror of the surrounding villages. One of these lions in recent years killed an officer who formed one of a shooting party organised for the benefit of one of the former governors of Bombay.

CHAPTER XXVI

SOME INDIAN ANIMALS

The squirrel. The tame antelope. Effect of the railway. Monkeys in Delhi. In the jungle. Wild pigs; their destruction. The mongoose. The buffalo; its milk; its disposition. The Indian donkey. Hard labour. Poor fare. Indian callousness. Elephants. Camels. The horse.

In the jungle of trees and coarse vegetation which surrounds many of the old-fashioned bungalows in India, the shrill, nor very musical call of the squirrel — half cry and half whistle — may frequently be heard. They gambol about the trees, and run up the walls of the bungalow, and chase each other along the eaves with apparent gaiety and freedom from care. But as you watch them through the chinks of the blinds made of slender reeds, which shade the verandah from the glare of the sun, you see signs that all is not harmony even in their small world.

The grey and black striped fur of the squirrel always appears spotlessly clean, and in all their spare moments they are busy at their toilet. The bushy tail is their chief beauty, and it is scarcely ever at rest. Like so many other animals, they

betray their varying emotions by the way in which they frisk it about. Their manners are beautiful, and when they have got hold of a choice morsel they take it in their paws, and sitting on their haunches eat it with evident enjoyment, but with a certain polish and grace of manner pretty to see. Young squirrels are easily tamed, and soon get reconciled to making their home in the jacket pocket of a schoolboy.

When I was staying in the bungalow of a country mission, an exquisitely graceful antelope stepped into the verandah, and entering the room where we were breakfasting, went up to my host and asked for food. He had tamed it when young, but it was now living a semi-wild life, and was often absent in the jungle for days together. In some parts of India various kinds of deer may be seen from the windows of the train. The making of a line of railway naturally has the tendency to drive the wild creatures of the district deeper into the jungle, but after a while they to some extent get accustomed to the passing of the train, and delightful glimpses of animal life can sometimes be got when travelling. Monkeys, for instance, have insatiable curiosity, and when they have got over their first alarm the quaint sight may sometimes be seen of a row of monkeys seated on the top of the boundary wall to watch the train go by.

Monkeys have become lawless citizens of Delhi, and will no doubt greatly welcome the

enlarged scope for mischief which the new city will open out to them. They travel in troops over the flat roofs, and are very bold and mischievous, and great thieves. But monkeys must be studied in their wild freedom in the woods to appreciate them. When seen leaping from tree to tree with refreshing elasticity, or from rock to rock in the open country, their spirit of fun and mischief having full scope, the sight is a delightful one. They stick very closely to their own districts, although now and then a solitary monkey will detach himself from the rest and search for pastures new.

Wild pigs are common in some parts, looking like the poor relations of their tame brethren. They do great harm amongst crops, and no weapon is of much avail against them except the gun. The Christian who shot the panther mentioned in the last chapter was largely employed by the Hindu farmers round about to shoot any wild pig that came into their fields. It was for him a profitable job, because, besides his fee, he got the carcase of the pig, for which he could always get Rs.10 from a Parsee, who regarded the flesh as a great luxury. Wild pigs are also chased in the so-called "sport" of pig-sticking, which is popular amongst some English residents.

Now and then the mongoose, useful as a destroyer of snakes and rats, may be caught sight of, with his long coarse fur, running across the road, or hunting along a fence, much in the same

way as a weasel shows himself in England, although the mongoose is a good deal larger. Sometimes they will even venture into a bungalow to prospect, and young ones are easily tamed and become domestic pets.

Every morning a lumbering buffalo shambles into the compound to be milked on the premises, in order to ensure getting the unadulterated article. Even then it is expedient to look into the bottom of the vessel to see that no water has been put there before the milking begins. Buffalo's milk is not very rich, and the cream, such as it is, produces a white and tasteless butter, which has generally to be doctored and coloured before an Englishman will look at it.

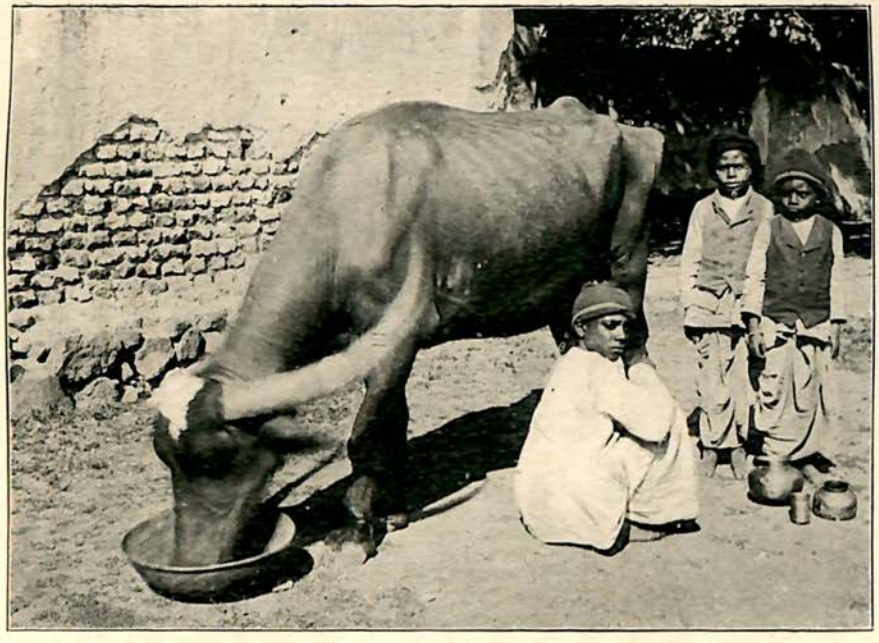
The buffalo for the greater part of the year has not much flesh on his huge skeleton, and is a sorrowful-looking creature with an expressionless eye and an inky skin, and often with enormous horns which give him a formidable appearance. But except when buffaloes fight amongst themselves they are not savage beasts, although their temper is uncertain, and they are said to be liable to attack an Englishman in districts where they are not accustomed to the sight. Generally buffaloes appear to take no interest whatever in life, except to regard it as a burden too heavy to bear. A whole herd is sent out to graze under the care of a small boy; they are in astonishing subjection to his despotic rule.

The Indian donkey is very small, and its foal

is a beautiful little creature; but its life-long sentence of hard labour begins early. It spends its days carrying great weights of earth, or brick, or stone, or gravel, in panniers made of coarse sacking, for buildings, road-making, and the like. They work in droves of a dozen, or twenty, or more, according to the prosperity of the contractor. When they have delivered their burden, the men and boys who are in charge each mount a donkey, the legs of the men almost touching the ground, and the cavalcade goes for a fresh load, often at full gallop.

It is an understood thing that an Indian donkey finds its own food, how and where he can, in odd moments during the day, or at night when he is turned adrift to wander as far as his hobbled legs can take him. The brief period of plenty, when grass springs up after the rains, is so brief that it must only make the rest of the year appear the more blank by way of contrast. Indians are credited with being humane, because they are unwilling to take life, but there are probably few people who are so callous concerning the sufferings of the animal world. The owners of the donkeys have a cruel custom of slitting their nostrils, because it is supposed to moderate the loudness of their bray.

Elephants are used much less as beasts of burden than was the case in days gone by. Some are employed in military service and in the pursuit of big game, but their chief function is to make an



MILKING THE BUFFALO.

[*To face p.* 180.

imposing appearance on grand occasions in some of the native states. But the fact that elephants were not used in the royal processions at the last Delhi Durbar, will probably lead to their being gradually less used even for ceremonial purposes. Camels are employed for all sorts of work in Northern India, and add greatly to the picturesqueness of the road and street traffic. The horse plays a subordinate part, comparatively speaking, in the labours of India, except for hack duty. And though wealthy people, both English and Indian, drive handsome horses, the motor-car is rapidly taking their place in the service of the rich, or the prosperous professional, of all nations.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE INDIAN WORLD OF NATURE

The Southern Cross. Crocodiles. Fire-flies. Locusts; their ravages. Indian birds; they cannot sing; their plumage. The "brain-fever" bird. Swallows. Peewits. Vultures. Crows. Kites. Tameness of the birds.

In spite of the expression, "a traveller's tale," being equivalent to saying that a story is probably untrue, your confidence in the general veracity of the traveller is strengthened when you find that certain things are even more beautiful or strange than books of travel led you to expect. For instance, the Southern Cross is a glorious constellation and an undoubted cross, and entirely satisfying, so that you are not disturbed by the opinions of the few who say that it is disappointing. Whether you see it for the first time from the deck of the steamer in the Red Sea, or for the hundredth time high up in the air over the heathen City of Poona, as if it claimed victory over it, the sight is always equally inspiring.

The view of crocodiles lying on the mud-bank of a river in Bengal inspired confidence in the accuracy of early teachings, because they were so

like the hideous monster in the picture hung on the nursery wall. A crocodile can see and breathe while the whole of its body is immersed in the water, because its eyes and nostrils are on a plane on the surface of the head. A person incautiously bathing, or dipping water out of the river, may be suddenly seized by a crocodile who, though on the watch, is buried in the muddy water and invisible. Every year a certain number of human lives are lost in this way. Cattle and other animals coming to the river-side to drink are dragged into the water and devoured. The Poona river, swollen to a torrent in the rains, and for the rest of the year reduced to a small stream, meandering along a stony and rocky bed, is not suited to the habits of a crocodile, and there are none.

The brilliance of fire-flies is quite beyond the description usually found in books. They flash hither and thither like tiny electric lamps, and they are so numerous in certain places at certain times that they might be supposed to be some organised scheme of fairy illumination on a large scale. Boys sometimes capture two or three and put them into a bit of muslin and carry them about as lamps, and the light they give is quite appreciable. The insect itself is a dull-looking little creature, apart from its luminosity.

Another astonishing experience in which the reality at least equals the descriptions, is a visitation of locusts. When you hear for the first time

the peculiar rustling sound made by the beating of the countless wings of the vast army which sweeps past in an unbroken stream for hours, you realise what an invasion of locusts really means. Military terms, such as "army," "invasion," are strictly applicable, because locusts come with a rush and determination, and a military precision, and an evident unanimity of purpose, which suggests the movements of soldiers under orders. This idea is accentuated when the head and body of the locust is of a bright red colour.

The rapid destruction which they cause has also been described with fidelity. They have jaws of great power, and when they take possession of a tree it is stripped in ten minutes or so. When locusts settle down on a group of trees, the colour of each tree is instantaneously changed from green to red, because there is practically a locust to every leaf. When they travel on again, the tree they leave behind them is bare as an English tree in mid-winter. Little can be done to arrest their progress. An ordinary garden may be protected to some extent by beating the trees with poles, and so driving off the locusts as fast as they alight. But to protect any large area in this way is impossible.

The natives try to frighten them by making a deafening din, beating tom-toms and tin cans, but it is doubtful whether the locusts pay any heed to these demonstrations. A few people amongst the lower castes eat locusts, but they

are not sought after by Indians in general. Monkeys, dogs, and some birds eat them, but their numbers are so vast that none of their enemies produce any appreciable diminution.

In the Indian world of nature the sweet melody of the birds of England is absent. No Indian bird knows how to sing. Some make a brave attempt, but they break down after the third note. The so-called Indian nightingale only deserves its name because its performance is a shade less disappointing than that of the rest. Nor do the birds compensate for their lack of musical power by the splendour of their plumage. It is generally supposed that plants and animals in the tropics must necessarily be brilliant in colour. But many English birds equal Indian ones even in this respect. For instance, the green woodpecker with his red crest is scarcely less gorgeous than the green parrot, and the kingfisher only comes behind its Indian relative in size. The plumage of the golden oriole is certainly sumptuous, and brilliant sunshine has, of course, the effect of showing off colour to the best advantage.

Though Indian birds cannot sing, they shout, and scream, and whistle. What is known amongst English residents as the "brain-fever" bird, is common in some districts. He makes a series of sounds, thought by some to resemble this word, over and over again with increasing rapidity and shrillness, until he breaks down and begins afresh. To people actually suffering from the

ordinary fever so common in India he is sometimes a serious annoyance, because it is almost impossible not to follow him mentally in his incessant repetition of "brain fever." To a few fortunate people his peculiar note does not suggest these words. Even the Indian sparrow drowns conversation with his shrill chirp, taking advantage of the ever-open doors and windows to invade the bungalow, and making determined efforts to make his nest in the most inconvenient places.

The swallows which build in the verandah are like old friends, and are always welcome. The curious cry which they make as they wheel in and out of the verandah in the last few minutes before they plunge into bed under the eaves, sounds almost melodious by contrast with the strange noises made by other birds. There is also a species of peewit who utters a rather pretty call, which might be supposed to be the Marathi version of what the English peewit says.

Vultures are as uncanny-looking as they are painted, and to see them waiting on the trees near the erections where Parsees put out their dead to be devoured, is not a pleasant sight. They also sit and watch near the Hindu burning-grounds, which suggests the uncomfortable idea that pickings are to be had there also. The rapidity with which they collect from all parts and swoop down upon the dead carcase of an animal is astonishing to witness. Their value

as scavengers is great, and in a very short time nothing is left of the carcase but bare bones.

Crows are also useful as scavengers. Nevertheless, they are a great nuisance, especially in Bombay. Their loud cawing is often most distracting; but they are also bold thieves, and do not hesitate to enter houses when they see their opportunity and to carry off any portable article which comes first to hand, even when it is of no possible use to them. Some of the birds of prey are beautiful objects, on account of their size, and the boldness of their flight. Kites wheel about in the air in large numbers around Poona. Since people carry almost everything upon their heads, a kite not unfrequently makes a sudden swoop and snatches a prize out of the basket.

Few people are allowed a gun license, so that birds are less afraid of mankind than they are in England, and favourable opportunities constantly occur of observing them near at hand. A great variety may be met with in an ordinary country walk in the cultivated parts of India where food is plentiful. Although they cannot sing, many of them have quaint and charming personal characteristics.

CHAPTER XXVIII

INSECTS IN INDIA

Noise of insects at night. Troublesome in the evening. The blister-fly. Bees. Wasps. Cockroaches. Ants in the bungalow. White ants. Scorpions; their sting. Boys callous of the feelings of insects. Bugs. Spiders. Mosquitoes. The mosquito-net. Flies. The eye-fly. Insects resembling their surroundings. Butterflies. The praying mantis.

AMIDST the many sounds of the restless Indian night, some far away, some near at hand, there is one which, when it commences, drowns all the rest. It is a harsh, metallic, rasping, shrill, unmusical sound. It might seem as if it had to do with some machinery, except that it is unlike the sound of any machine that you ever heard. It begins in the room where you are sitting reading, or else out in the verandah, where you are enjoying the cooler breeze of evening. Loud as it is, you cannot locate it. At one moment you think it is up aloft amongst the rafters, at another moment it seems to be close by. It emanates from an uninteresting-looking brown insect, about an inch long, who makes prodigious jumps like a grasshopper. One night when this

din was so great that conversation was almost impossible, I was astonished to find that the insect was on the table, only a few inches away from my book, and I was able to see his method of making this sound. He was vibrating his horny wing-cases with marvellous rapidity, producing such an amount of noise that, unless one had seen it in process of production, it would have seemed impossible that it could arise from such a humble source.

At certain seasons, and especially when it is warm and damp, the evening meal in the country is attended with difficulty because of the quantity of insects, especially beetles, which are attracted by the lamp, and they appear to make a specialty of falling into any dish which may be at hand. When camping out the difficulty is intensified, and the only thing to be done is to put the lamp at a distance and to dine in comparative darkness. Such a variety of insects come that an entomologist might make quite a respectable collection in the course of one night. One of these evening visitors after the rains is a long, slim beetle, green, or sometimes buff in colour, with a small head which fits loosely into his body. He twists his head about as if his collar was uncomfortable. When alarmed he exudes a strong acid which at once raises a blister. He is the more dangerous because, flying in rapidly, he often alights on your collar or neck, and the action of brushing him off causes the emission of the acid, and the blister follows.

In the daytime, bees, black and hairy, immense in size, and making a noise like a threshing-machine, come banging in at the open windows. They are not as formidable as they look, except in their own domains, and they quickly depart in response to indications that they are not wanted. They know their way out without difficulty, which is contrary to the experience of most intruding animals.

A solitary wasp is apt to select inconvenient places in which to build a mud-cell wherein to deposit its egg, and the store of live caterpillars destined to be the food of its young when hatched. You find a keyhole, or the tap of a filter, filled with mud as the result of this wasp's labours. It works so rapidly that it generally completes its job in the course of a day. An even more inconvenient site for its nest is the sleeve of a garment left hanging on a peg, especially if you put the garment on while the wasp is at work. A small colony of social wasps built their comb under the refectory table of the village Mission-house. They were so determined to remain that for some months they resisted all attempts to get rid of them, returning as often as they were dispersed.

Cockroaches, some of great size, abound in most houses, and are very destructive. They nibble the bindings of books, and cut quaint devices, which look almost as if they had been done with a pair of scissors, in clothes put away in drawers. They run at an amazing pace when they think they are in danger.

Jet black ants, enormously big and warlike in appearance, come into bungalows, sometimes in unpleasantly large numbers, to see what they can pick up. They are not really aggressive, nor do they do any particular mischief. Another kind of ant, very like an ordinary English one though smaller, is a great trial to housekeepers. They get into the bread and sugar and other stores, and though cupboards are generally set in saucers of water on account of insect depredators, these ants often manage to get in.

White ants are most destructive in a house if it is built of materials which they can deal with. In the case of many houses in India, mud is used instead of mortar, and the structure suffers greatly if the white ants take possession. All woodwork, including furniture, ought to be of teak, because they are unable to burrow into it. Sound hard floors are necessary, so that when ants try to work their way upwards they may find their road blocked. Otherwise, in the course of one night, they will eat large holes in a mat or carpet, coming up from beneath. They make havoc in a library if they get amongst the books. Many ant-heaps out in the country are so large as to be conspicuous objects.

Scorpions may be found anywhere. In your bedding, in your boots, in your clothes, under your books and, out of doors, chiefly under stones. You soon get into the way of prudently shaking each garment before putting it on. The scorpion

averages about two inches in length, but they vary a good deal in size, and also in colour. They much resemble a little lobster in appearance. Their sting is not dangerous under ordinary circumstances, but the pain is great, and resembles a blow on the funny bone, continuing acute for some hours. The boys, sleeping on the floor and having bare feet, get stung now and then, and generally make great lamentations over the misfortune.

Indian boys are like many English rustics in their disregard for the feelings of animals—they appear honestly to think that they have none—and they delight in forming a chain of scorpions by making them grip each other, which they do fiercely, and hang on tenaciously. Boys will also nip off the end of their tail to prevent them from stinging, and leave them in this maimed condition.

Wherever Indians live, bugs are invariably found. Hence in schools where many Indian children are gathered together these insects are sure to find an entrance, in spite of vigilant care and cleanliness. When the small boys of the Mission moved out from their old quarters in the city, which like all old native houses was much infested, immense pains were taken to make sure that no bug was transported to the new home in the country. But it was not long before these intruders showed themselves in the new house. Possibly they fulfil some useful but at present unknown function as destroyers of microbes.

Spiders are much in evidence, and some are

very large and fierce. Out in the country I once fairly ran away from a great spider, which made for my foot with a courage and ferocity such as one would not expect to find in an animal of the kind. But they are not altogether unwelcome in a house, because they help to keep down the population of the insect world. There is a handsome little spider who spins no web, and roves about, and springs on its victim like a tiger.

Mosquitoes are the most troublesome insects to be found in the tropics, although some districts are much more infested than others. There are several different kinds. The one that causes the most irritation is smaller than the average English gnat. They are veritable bloodsuckers, and the amount of blood which a mosquito can imbibe is astonishing. They may be seen so distended after their night's work that they can scarcely fly. Newcomers from England are their special prey, and their bites often cause a good deal of inflammation. The loud hum with which they approach is almost as disturbing as their bite. Most English people have nets of fine gauze surrounding their beds, and some Indians have adopted the same precaution since the promulgation of the theory that the bite of an infected mosquito is the cause of malarial fever. Natives when they sleep, generally roll themselves up completely, head and all, in a *dhota*, which they use then after the manner of a sheet. The mosquito-nets cut off a good deal of air, and people are tempted to discard them unwisely when

the nights are intensely hot. The framework from which the nets depend is a frail counterpart of the four-poster of the Victorian age. The net is usually tucked in under the mattress, to prevent any possibility of the mosquito entering. In places where mosquitoes abound they are troublesome by day as well as by night, and they are specially fond of attacking the ankles of persons seated at table.

Towards the close of the rainy season flies become numerous almost everywhere, but especially in a native city like Poona, and they are an unpleasant indication of its unsavoury condition. They fall into your cup, the table is black with them, your food becomes a matter of dispute between you and them. But out of doors, except at meal-time in camp, they are not nearly so aggressive as the summer flies which buzz around during a country walk in England. Though they could be dispensed with without regret, they are probably of great value as scavengers.

There is a very small fly which is popularly known as the "eye-fly," because it hovers in front of your eye like a troublesome person who will not take a refusal. It apparently thinks that the pupil is the entrance into some desirable chamber. Fortunately it rarely gets beyond the stage of prospecting this supposed entrance. Now and then it travels round to your ear and prospects there also. But though it does so at a safe distance it makes an irritating hum, and it is so small that attempts to flap it away are futile.

There are many striking instances in India of insects being protected from their enemies by their likeness in colour and markings to the tree or plant on which they feed. The most noteworthy example of this is a long insect, so precisely similar to a bit of dry stick that, until you actually see it walk, you can hardly believe that it can be anything else.

Butterflies, in the Poona district at anyrate, are disappointing. They are larger than the English ones—the scale of most things in India is big—but their colours are not strikingly brilliant. Some of the large moths are handsome, but not more so than many of the English nocturnal moths.

The most comical insect is the praying mantis. It is of a fresh green colour, often three or four inches long, and something like a grasshopper in appearance. When it alights on your table in the evening, attracted by the lamp, it behaves in a seemingly ridiculous way. It puts its long front legs together as if praying, and sways about as it does so in an absurdly affected fashion, reminiscent of Thackeray's description of Charles Honeyman in the pulpit.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE INDIAN ASCETIC

The fakir from Delhi. Mohammedan tombs. A visit to the fakir; his possessions; his manner of life; his temper; diminishing austerity; building his shanty; he settles down. Hindu religious community; their dress; how they beg; of both sexes; the community children; the *Guru;* opinions of the villagers concerning them.

A FAKÍR (that is to say, a wandering Mohammedan ascetic) from Delhi took up his quarters by the tomb of a departed fakir, who is buried by the side of a footpath, in the field of which the Mission property at Yerandawana forms part. There are many such-like tombs, here and there, all about India. They somewhat resemble rude altar-tombs in appearance, two or three feet high, made of brick or stone, and whitewashed. Generally they are under the shade of a tree, either planted at the time of burial or growing there already. On the anniversary of the day of death faithful Mohammedans will often cover the tomb with a kind of coarse muslin, edged with gold or yellow tinsel, and decorate it with flowers. That these tombs are numerous, and that they are often found in remote country districts, is accounted for, firstly, by the

fact that this kind of asceticism was formerly much more popular than is the case now; and, secondly, that as the fakirs wandered everywhere, and ultimately died in the course of their wanderings, each would be buried where he happened to die. The Mohammedans of the district would then build up the, not very expensive, tomb as a tribute to his religious profession, without much reference perhaps as to the amount of strictness with which he fulfilled his obligations.

The tomb at Yerandawana is in a very exposed situation. The only shelter, several yards off, is a *barbel*, which is a tree bearing small leaves and covered with thorns, and hardly affords any shade at all, so that the fakir was exposed to the scorching rays of the sun all day long. This has not the same malignant effect on an Indian that it would speedily have upon an Englishman, but the former dislikes sitting in the sun in the middle of the day quite as much as he values the genial warmth of its morning rays in the cold weather.

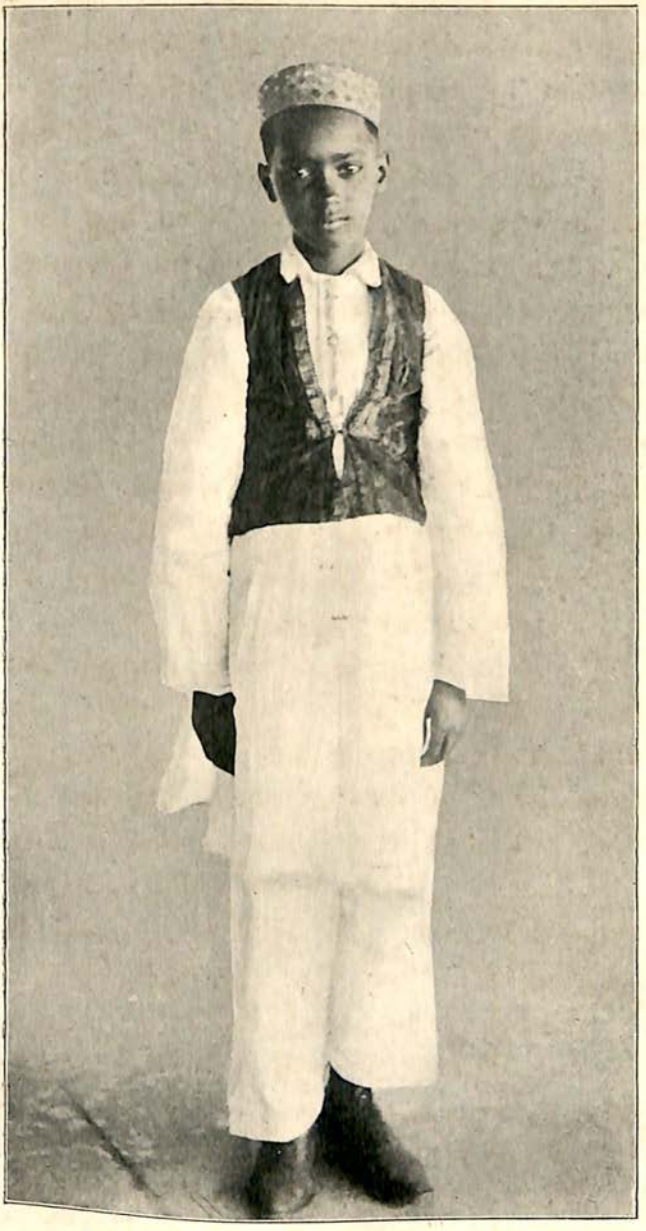
After the fakir had lived here a while I went to call upon him, and squatted down beside the tomb. A tall slender bamboo, which in such cases is usually adorned with a little flag, marked the spot. He had a small lantern burning at night, which I used to see glimmering when I closed the church door after Compline. His other property consisted of the crutch-stick, which is the emblem of his profession; a brass bowl for water; a piece of sacking and an old blanket for his bed. There

was also a large accumulation of ashes from the wood fire on which he prepared his food.

When I called he was just rekindling his fire, with the help of a match-box and some splinters of wood which somebody had given him. He was warmly dressed, considering that it was the middle of the hot weather, in an old cloth jacket and a coloured *dhota*, rather scanty but of thicker material than is usual in our part of India. He had long black hair, which he said had never been cut. He seemed rather proud of it, and often dressed it with a little comb. It was parted neatly in the middle and fell in locks over his shoulders, and glistened with oil. He wore moustache and beard, the former cut very short. In the neatness and cleanliness of his person he was a great contrast to the Hindus of the same type, who are called *gosavies*, and whose heads are purposely left to nature, the result of which may easily be imagined.

He told me that it had taken him one and a half months from Delhi, a distance of nearly a thousand miles, and that he had travelled all the way on foot, and that he meant to remain for two months by this tomb, and then he would go to Delhi. He had been in all parts of India and Burma, and had lived this life ever since he was a child. He knew nothing about the particular fakir whose tomb he was honouring, but it was sufficient that he had been a mendicant like himself.

An egg-merchant is the only Mohammedan living in Yerandawana, and I fancy that the fakir



DOWD PHERIDE, THE EGG-MERCHANT'S SON.

[*To face p.* 198.

was rather a tax on him, although a few Hindus gave him small contributions. I asked him how he lived, and he said that he ate what people gave him, and that if they did not give he went without. I asked how he managed in the rainy season. He replied that if people offered him shelter he accepted it, but that if there were no offers of hospitality he sat in the rain. He said that he had no books and that he could not read. The true fakir, he added, has no books; his mind is his book, and all that he ought to know about God is written there. I asked him whether he considered his life a useful one. He said, "Yes, certainly; I pray." "For yourself?" I asked. "No, for others," was his reply. I saw he was anxious to get on with his cooking, and so I brought my visit to a close.

Unfortunately the fakir did not improve the longer he stayed with us. The Mission children were at first inclined to make game of him. Their attitude to the religions to which some of them once belonged is generally one of intense contempt, and they do not always exercise discretion in their way of expressing their feelings. The so-called "ascetics" are feared in India, but not respected, and our children, no longer fearing them, are apt to show their scorn. The fakir did not accept with humility the disrespect of the children, and I first became aware that they had been calling after him rudely, when he turned and faced them with fierce rebukes.

But they were not the only people with whom he quarrelled. Both on the road, and at his station by the tomb, I often heard him pouring out torrents of angry eloquence, sometimes to the rather numerous women who visited him, bringing him offerings of food. I was not near enough to understand whether he was wroth because the offerings were not to his taste. Also, little luxuries began to gather round him. With the arrival of the rains came an umbrella. A smart new lamp to mark out his encampment at night took the place of the shabby old one. He usually returned from his frequent visits to the Mohammedan egg-merchant enjoying one of the cheap smokes which Indians love, and he began to put up the framework of a shanty as a shelter over himself and the tomb. The materials for the shanty came in but slowly, so that it was some time before the fakir could be said to have a roof over his head. Perhaps the faithful did not altogether approve of the diminishing austerity in the ascetic life.

His shed was completed at last, and he could no longer be said to be quite homeless. But though his new house could not be called luxurious, his life had lost the edifying element of the complete poverty of his shelterless sojourn by the side of the tomb. Nor, when his time was up, did he show any inclination to resume his wanderings, and it seems not unlikely that he will remain in his quarters at the tomb till *his* turn comes to die, and then the kindly egg-merchant will erect a

whitewashed sepulchre over his remains, and he will be reckoned among the saints.

Members of a large and peculiar religious community of Hindus are often to be met with in the Bombay Presidency. Their habit resembles the ordinary dress worn by Hindus, but a good deal amplified, and dyed a slate colour. It is a rather successful adaptation of everyday dress to religious purposes. They travel generally in large companies and stay a long time in one spot, where, as a rule, they form a camp of temporary huts. But sometimes they take a house for a while. Small detachments from the main body wander round the villages, lodging in an empty house, or taking possession of the village rest-house. They remain till the charity of the village is exhausted, and then they move on.

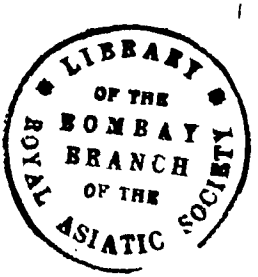
They beg on a large scale. The "one *pice*," or farthing, which the ordinary beggar asks for, does not at all represent their idea of charity. They expect any fairly well-to-do person, such as a shopkeeper, to give sufficient food for the whole community for one day, and they sit in his house till they get it. They do not stand at the door and salaam and cringe, like the ordinary mendicant. They boldly enter in uninvited and demand alms. They are much disliked on account of the largeness of their wants. But they are also feared on account of the terrible nature of their denunciations if they do not get what they ask for. They profess to be celibates, but a peculiarity

of their constitution is that the community consists of both males and females, and they camp close to each other. The small detachments who travel round the villages are also mixed companies. There are a large number of children attached to the community, who are brought up to follow the same life and wear the same slate-coloured habit. So also do the women, who receive an education, contrary to the custom so prevalent in India, and are said to spend a good deal of their time teaching the children. Their explanation of the presence of children in their midst is that they are orphans, or that they have been given to them by parents in fulfilment of a vow.

One of the small sub-sections of the community took up their quarters in the verandah of a shut-up house in Yerandawana. Passing through the village one evening, I came upon them just as they were about to sit down to their evening meal. I asked a rather pleasant-looking, middle-aged woman whether the several children that I saw playing about went to school. She replied, "No. *I* teach them." A tall, not very attractive-looking old man came out of the verandah, and asked who I was. When I gave him my name, he said that his name was "Krishna *Padre*"—the latter being the popular title given in India to a clergyman. He was the *Guru*, or religious teacher, to the community.

I said that I was the Christian *Guru* of the place. He asked me the usual questions as to

what pay I got, and who gave me my food and clothing, and the meaning of the knots in my girdle. Then he asked me if I ate meat, and when I said that I did, he took a large pinch of snuff, saying that I was not a true *Guru*, because a true *Guru* never eats meat. Someone then called him away to supper. I invited him to come and see the church next day, but the following morning they all moved on to the next village. The Yerandawana people were thankful to be rid of them, and assured me that the *Guru's* assertion that he never took meat was not true; as also another of his assertions, that they never worshipped idols, because they carried one about with them and the old *Guru* worshipped it daily.


LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER XXX

THE INDIAN WIDOW

Exaggerated statements about widows. Easterns naturally demonstrative in their grief. The conservative widow. Influential and wealthy widows. Remarriage of widows. Hindu Widows' Home; its aim and object; a visit to the Home; the daily routine; impressions made by the visit. The True Light. The future of the widows. Custom a hindrance to progress. The effect of caste. The Indian daughter-in-law; not necessarily in bondage. A kind-hearted mother-in-law.

THERE has been a good deal of false sentiment expended, and exaggerated statements made, concerning the condition of widows in India. The condition of a widow is of necessity a trying one in any country. She often has to exchange a position of affluence and importance for one of poverty and obscurity. The Indian widow is at anyrate sure of a home and support from her relations, which is not always the case with the English widow. The stripping of the ornaments, the shaving of the head, the shabby garments, the meagre food, the hard work, and the despised position of the Indian widow has often been described in moving terms. But the Western widow also lays aside her ornaments during her

time of mourning, and the shaving of the head is a natural Eastern outward symbol of sorrow. The Hindu man, who invariably wears a moustache, shaves it off when he loses some near relation, such as a parent or a brother. The plain white garments which the Indian widow usually wears have nothing of the dreary severity of the garb of the veiled English widow, to whom also scanty food, hard work, and humble station often becomes her portion from necessity.

Easterns are always demonstrative in their expressions of grief. Hence the removal of the ornaments, the cutting off the hair, etc., is performed in a demonstrative way. But the Hindu widow would not wish it otherwise; and although all the ceremonies may not be exactly congenial to her, she is at anyrate a person of importance even in her humiliation, and that is a great compensation to her. If she has money—and some Hindu husbands leave all their wealth to their wives—she will find herself surrounded by affectionate relations, all of them ready to undertake the management of her property, and each of them warning her of the necessity of being on her guard not to trust any of the others.

At a Hindu Widows' Home, to be described presently, the inmates dress as they like, wear what ornaments they please, and let their hair grow. Someone visiting the Home was surprised to see a widow with her head shaved, and wearing the unadorned white garments. On inquiry, it

transpired that this woman refused to avail herself of her freedom, and that she preferred to bear the outward marks of widowhood out of respect to the memory of her husband.

One of the most influential of the residents in Yerandawana village is a widow, and she is much looked up to. She is well-dressed, wears a good deal of gold jewellery, and her white hair sets off her wrinkled brown face. She was photographed in a group with her grandsons; and her relations and other villagers not unfrequently call at the Mission bungalow and ask to see the photograph.

The real hardship for the young Hindu widow is that she cannot marry again. In spite of much talk amongst so-called Hindu "reformers" about the advisability of allowing the remarriage of widows, very little practical progress has been made in this direction. Many young girls are thus condemned unwillingly to lead unmarried lives, their widowhood having often begun in actual childhood. The result of this is, as might be expected, in too many cases disastrous.

Many of the attempts of Hindus to establish charitable institutions, such as orphanages, have been definitely in opposition to Christian efforts in the same direction, and they did not deserve to prosper, and few survive. But there is one institution, which was founded with a genuine desire to ameliorate the position of young Hindu widows, which has not only held its ground, but has steadily enlarged its sphere of usefulness.

SARLA KALU WITH HER GREAT-GRANDSON.

[*To face p.* 206.

This Hindu Widows' Home is out in the country, two or three miles beyond our own village Mission. Its aim and object, as expressed in their report, published in English as well as Marathi, is as follows:—"To educate young widows from the higher castes that do not allow widow remarriage, so as to enable them to earn an honourable living and to cultivate their minds." The work, begun on a small scale several years ago, has gradually developed. The inmates of the Home number eighty or more, and nearly all of these are Brahmin widows. But even Brahmins are divided into sections, and although in the Home they are all able to eat in the same room, they sit in different groups according to the section to which they belong.

A visit to the Home is an interesting, but rather pathetic experience. The buildings are excellently adapted to their purpose; substantial, well designed, and conveniently arranged. Extreme neatness and cleanliness, so rare in India, prevail. The young women study diligently under competent masters, and they all share in the housework. The daily bath and the washing of their principal garment, which is part of the necessary routine of a high-caste Hindu before their chief meal, takes some time. Hindu schools never open till late, except in the very hot weather, because these operations, including their meal, have to be got through before the real work of the day begins. The widows have only two regular meals, the one

at 10, the other at 6·30. But prosperous Indians eat largely at one sitting, so that when people eat only two meals a day, which is the custom in most Indian families, it does not mean that they are put on short commons.

They have a large prayer-room at the Home, in which they assemble for the reading of Hindu scriptures and explanations of the same, and occasionally there is a short discourse. There was no idol in this room at the time of my visit, but I was informed that one would be placed there eventually, not because it was in any way necessary for their worship, but because it was customary. The small *Tulsi* plant, the common object of devotion amongst women, was the only visible indication of idolatry. This plant was growing in one of the courtyards on the sort of ornamental pedestal of brick and plaster which is the usual arrangement. It was allowed in condescension to the prejudices of the minority, and I was assured that it was only the few who made use of it.

The high-caste Hindu woman has a grave and rather melancholy, lifeless face, and the inmates of the Home were largely of this type. But they did not look otherwise than contented, especially the younger ones. But the impression left upon me, as I left the place and bade farewell to the gifted and evidently most earnest Indian lady who showed me over the establishment, was one of intense melancholy. Here was the husk without the kernel. Consciously, or unconsciously, there was

much in the Widows' Home which was copied from Christian institutions, and which never could have sprung out of Hinduism. If only Christ, with all that He has to give, could be received into the Home, what light and gladness He would bring into the hearts of these poor gropers after truth! It is impossible to guess whether or no this effort may be preparing the way for Christ in the distant future. At present there is no indication that Christianity is a subject of either interest or inquiry on the part of any of the inmates, except for that visit which a few of them paid to our village church.

The serious flaw in the project, from a merely utilitarian point of view, is that the future of these young women appears rather vague. The demand for female Hindu teachers in India is at present small, and a few only have found employment in this way. Three or four have become nurses or midwives. Knitting, weaving, and other industrial work has taken practical shape and may lead to something. But, so far, only one student has accomplished remarriage, which is what would make the Home a real blessing amongst Hindus. There are now a number of educated men who feel the desirability of an accomplished wife who could share in their interests and intellectual pursuits. The great disparity of age between husband and wife, almost universal amongst Hindus, is beginning to be recognised as an abuse, although the idea still lingers, even amongst Indian Christians, that

the husband should always be rather the elder of the two. These young widows, well-educated, trained, and disciplined by their busy life in the institution, would make excellent wives for the educated Hindus. But the power of custom is so overwhelming in India that, in spite of the obvious advantages to be derived from the arrangement, the probability is that the remarriage of a Hindu widow will for a long time continue to be a most unusual event.

Caste here also, as well as everywhere else, is a barrier to progress. I once suggested to a delightful and accomplished young Hindu, of good position but not a Brahmin, who would have liked an intellectual and companionable wife, that he should marry one of the widows from the Home. But he assured me that such a thing was absolutely impossible on account of his caste, and that not a widow in the Home would have him, in spite of all that he had to offer her.

There has also been a great deal of exaggeration, in books about Indian customs, concerning the position of the young daughter-in-law, as if of necessity it must be one of great bondage. The mother-in-law no doubt rules her daughter-in-law from the time she takes up residence in the household, because she is usually still quite a child and has to be taught her duties, and especially how to cook. But, for the most part, the mother-in-law appears to be very devoted to her daughter-in-law, and if she sometimes corrects her it is in her

anxiety that she should excel in domestic affairs, so that she may be a good housewife.

One of the farmers' wives brought her youngest son's little wife to the village Mission bungalow to ask us to show her the lad's photograph, which had been taken some time back. There did not appear to be any restraint or mystery in speaking of her husband, which we are sometimes told in books is a characteristic of Hindu matrimonial life. The young wife, who was a pretty child of about thirteen years, was pleasantly shy; but her cheerful mother-in-law showed her the photograph and discussed it, together with that of another group of villagers, in which she picked out her own husband, with much animated talk, and pleasant smiles and laughter. Except for the difference in the setting of the picture it might have stood for a scene in a country parsonage in England.

CHAPTER XXXI

WRONGDOING IN INDIA

The High Courts. The petty courts. Disappearance of the school clock. Methods of Indian police; indignation of the villagers; conduct of the police complained of; an inquiry instituted; unsatisfactory result. Police torture leads to concealment of crime. Detection of crime difficult in India. Thieving. Serious moral wrongs. Successful concealment.

In the Indian High Courts justice is administered with extreme care, and sentences are pronounced with a full sense of responsibility and with complete impartiality, so far as it is possible to come at the truth where a large measure of false evidence is almost sure to have place in every case. Indians who have been raised to important judicial positions have shown themselves fully competent to discharge the duties of their office rightly, and have shown much legal sagacity, together with the other special qualifications which go to make a good judge.

But when you descend to the petty courts, the state of things is less satisfactory. When everything is in the hands of a lower grade of Indian officials, and European supervision is necessarily

of the slightest, influence and money and favour and luck have much to do with the chances for or against the prisoner. In the tracking of culprits and the gathering of evidence, and in all the preparatory work in which police are engaged, it is to be feared that unlawful methods are still practised, especially in the more remote country districts. Some of the European police do not seem to take much trouble to stamp out these abuses.

We had an opportunity of seeing something of the ways in which Indian police try to discover an offender, after the disappearance one night of the clock from the village Mission day-school. We informed the *Patel*, or headman, of our loss, which was the correct procedure. He, at leisure, held a sort of court of inquiry in the verandah of the Mission bungalow; but as nothing transpired he, again at leisure, reported the matter to the city police, and two men in plain clothes were sent to make preliminary inquiries. Not being able to ascertain anything definite, they began to put in practise their own methods of extracting evidence. They caned a suspected boy in order to try and get him to confess, and also one of his companions who they supposed might know something about it. I myself saw the marks of the cane on the boys. The punishment would not have been excessive supposing they had been convicted of the offence. The police were also said to have beaten a labouring man in order to

extort a confession, because there was a rumour that the boys had given the clock to him.

The village, usually friendly and easygoing, began to get much exercised over these attentions of the police. The *Patel*, a foolish and dissipated young man, found his liberty seriously curtailed by having frequently to attend the City Police Court to report progress. The village *Mahars*, or low-caste men, are liable to be called upon amongst their other duties to serve as village constables. These men were getting tired of having to act as escort to the boys and others, who were being summoned daily to the court, often being kept waiting there for the whole day. A large deputation of villagers arrived at the Mission bungalow to protest, and my assurances that none of these proceedings arose from any promptings of mine were only partially believed.

We were left in peace for a week or so, and I hoped that the matter was at an end. But the police woke up again, and set upon Bhau, the son of the Mission gardener, on the ground that he cleaned the school and thus had access to the clock. Bhau was not a particularly estimable character, but having helped to clean the school for many years, it did not seem likely that he should suddenly have taken it into his head to steal an old clock. But it is a disturbing feature of police inquiries in remote districts, that they feel that anything is better than to let the

crime pass into the category of offences the perpetrators of which have not been discovered.

It was now the turn of Bhau and his relations to appear daily at the city court. For a time no cruelty was perpetrated, until one afternoon two police appeared in the village and beat Bhau in the village *chowdi*, or place of assembly, and they ordered him to attend the court again the next day. As soon as I heard what had happened, I was naturally as indignant as the villagers, and went myself to the court with the boy. I was quickly taken to the Hindu police inspector of the district in which Yerandawana is situated. In him I found a courteous, English-speaking Brahmin, who promised to come himself and look into the matter. He did so, examined Bhau, asked various questions, and promised that the conduct of the police should be investigated.

Meanwhile I had written a letter of complaint to the District Superintendent of Police, and two inspectors, one a Mohammedan, the other a Hindu, were sent to hold a formal inquiry. One of these men revealed something of their methods, when engaged in collecting evidence, by remarking to me that "a few slaps would not be of much consequence, but that anything of the nature of cruelty must not be allowed." It was only in response to my assertion that nothing whatever of the nature of punishment must be used in order to obtain evidence, that he said, "Of course not. It must be stopped altogether."

The labouring man who was said to have been beaten was called to give evidence. But unfortunately the policeman who was supposed to have done this was sitting outside, and beckoning to him, got a word with him before I realised what was taking place, and the man denied that he had been beaten. I was glad to see that the inspectors showed real indignation at this attempt to tamper with a witness. They were both very polite, and in examining the village boys tried to copy our paternal way of speaking to them, with rather comical results. When it transpired that one of the boys was an orphan, the Mohammedan Inspector said in English, "Oh dear! sad, sad," as if it was the first case of the kind he had ever met with, and he recommended the boy to seek refuge in the Mission orphanage.

Although they professed to be indignant with the police, and said that they would be severely punished, I was not altogether surprised at the nature of the report which they ultimately sent to the District Superintendent, a copy of which was forwarded to me. It was accompanied by a memorandum, saying that the charges appeared to have been considerably exaggerated, but that the constable who was reported to have "slapped" the boys had been "transferred to headquarters," whatever that might mean.

That irregular proceedings on the part of the police were only stayed with difficulty by the force of English interference and emphatic words and

letters, suggests how hopeless may be the position of any unhappy mortal in out-of-the-way places on whom the police choose to father a charge. Many tales are told of the ingenious barbarities still practised in the endeavour to extort confessions from suspected persons, or unwilling witnesses, and it is to be feared that these tales are not without foundation. The apparent tendency of some English officials to make light of complaints, does not give much room for hope that the evil system will be quickly eradicated.

Even supposing that torture was justifiable on the ground that it leads to the detection of crime, the actual result is probably quite the reverse. It certainly leads to false confessions. People in their fear are tempted to say that they have done a certain thing, in order to escape from present pain. It has often been urged that confessions made by prisoners to the Indian police should not be accepted as evidence, and this is a reform urgently needed. The trouble to which the police subjected our villagers will not deter them from committing offences, but it has convinced them, from the Patel down to the Mahars, that if in the future there is any wrongdoing in the village, anything is preferable to invoking the aid of the police. And that is a serious result, because in an out-of-the-way village, if the Patel takes no action, almost any crime, even murder, could be committed, and the fact need never be known.

It should, however, be added that the detection

of wrongdoers is beset in India with peculiar difficulties. The presence of serious crime in a certain locality may be a sufficiently self-evident fact, and yet it may be years before it is brought home to its real authors. The Western rogue often betrays himself by his clumsy efforts to escape. The Eastern wrongdoer never commits this mistake. While the police are searching for him far and wide, he is very likely all the time living in their midst.

In the smaller sphere of a household or school, there is a similar difficulty in discovering the real origin of some irregularity. Thieving may go on in a certain bungalow; all kinds of people are suspected, almost always the wrong ones; if the police are called in, they generally lay the guilt on one of the poorer class of servants, who in sheer fright at being accused, and with the dread of torture in his mind, is almost ready to say that he is guilty. Innocent servants are sometimes thoughtlessly discharged without character, only on suspicion. Not unfrequently, even before the excitement has subsided, fresh thefts occur, showing that the thief is still at large. And if he is ever found out, which is not by any means invariably the case, the chances are that he will prove to be somebody near at hand, who was supposed to be above suspicion.

Serious moral wrongs may go on in an Indian household quite unknown to most of its members, and so skilfully concealed that they may have existed for years without suspicion. Even when

the matter has ultimately come to light, the head of the household is perhaps the last to learn what nearly everybody else knew. Many Indian school-boys are ready enough to tell tales of each other concerning trifling matters, and Indian school authorities unfortunately rather encourage the habit, and the sneak does not get sent to Coventry as he ought to be. But when something serious has happened which it is the duty of the boys to report, it is rare to find amongst them one of sufficient force of character to enable him to do so, and the unembarrassed denial of any knowledge of the offence adds greatly to the difficulty of detecting the offender. Though there are brilliant exceptions, Christian principles rarely stand the test of truthfulness when really serious complications have arisen. And the Indian story-teller so seldom contradicts himself, and if he finds himself in a corner he gets out of it so readily, that it is difficult not to believe him, even when you have the strongest reasons for thinking that he is deceiving you.

In a certain boys' school it was known that some evil influence was at work, but it could not be traced to its root. When elder boys left who were thought to be possibly the cause of the evil, it was hoped that the trouble would cease. But several generations of boys passed out of the school, and the evil influence remained. When its source was discovered after some years, the clue was given by an almost chance remark of a

small boy. The person who had so long been a centre of corruption had been so little suspected that, even after it had been brought home to him, it was difficult to understand how he had been able to secure concealment so effectually that no shadow of suspicion was ever aroused.

CHAPTER XXXII

PROPERTY IN INDIA

Boundary stones. Government Survey Department. The village map. How the stones are placed; how to use them. The Hindu village clerk. Litigation in India. Lawyers' devices. Conversation about money. Poverty great. Christians and money. English fair-dealing not always apparent.

If you want to buy land in India, it is nearly always difficult to find out who is the real owner. But in one important point the British Government has made the transaction quite simple. When you are travelling through India in the train, the impression left upon you is that of a country which belongs to no one in particular, because there is often so little trace of any boundary between field and field. There are scarcely any hedges or walls, or when they exist they are so irregular and come to an end so unexpectedly, that they only add to the impression of vagueness of ownership. But the traveller, if he is observant of detail, will have noticed stones sticking up here and there, bearing some trace of having been shaped with a tool and painted or whitewashed, and apparently placed in their position for a definite object. Sometimes the

stones stand alone, sometimes they are grouped in twos or threes or more. The traveller, vaguely mindful that the worship of stones is common amongst Hindus, concludes that these have been put there for religious purposes.

But that is not so. These are only the boundary stones planted by the Survey Department of the Government of India, perhaps one of the best organised and most useful of Government departments. The whole of India has been elaborately surveyed, and the maps are being continually revised and corrected, and brought up to date. When making the survey the boundary line of fields and other property was patiently and carefully investigated, objections and claims listened to, and an impartial decision arrived at. Each village has now its own map taken from the Survey. Not only every field and garden is clearly shown, but the position of all the boundary stones is marked, and they are arranged on a system which makes a mistake as to the limit of any property almost an impossibility: unless, indeed, any one "removeth his neighbour's landmark"; an offence which is not unknown, but for which the penalty is heavy.

The system is a simple one. A boundary stone is placed at the corner of a field, or wherever there is an angle, and the boundary is always drawn in a straight line from stone to stone. If four fields meet at a certain point there may be as many as five stones, one in the centre and one on each of

the four boundary lines a few feet from the centre. The number and position of each stone being marked on the map, even villagers who cannot read or write are able to identify the different groups of stones by the number in each group, and the direction in which the additional stones are pointing.

For instance, you want to know the length and precise direction of one side of a plot of land. Often there is no indication on the ground itself of any boundary line at all, especially if it is uncultivated land—neither ditch, or wall, or tree, or any other mark. But you station yourself at the corner, and from thence look towards the stone, a few feet off, on the boundary line you want to fix. Now and then your line of vision is made doubly sure by a second stone two or three feet farther on. Then, far away, but exactly in a line with the stones which indicated your line of vision, you will catch sight of another boundary stone, and you know that that is the extent of the plot, or that at anyrate there is an angle at that point. Whenever there is any doubt through a stone getting overgrown with vegetation, or displaced, the truth is easily got at by going to some other corner and taking the line from there.

Each field is numbered, and in the books kept by the village clerk, or accountant, the owner of each plot is recorded, and change of ownership, or any other matter of importance affecting the property, is supposed to be noted. The reason

why, in spite of this, it is often difficult to come at the real owner, is that most Indian landowners are in difficulties through expenses incurred in the marriage of their children, so that their property more often than not is encumbered with mortgages. The average Hindu village clerk also is not to be depended on, and as they are dealing with illiterate people, they have many opportunities of falsifying village records. Also, the inveterate habit of procrastination leads to vagueness in the record, and transactions take place which are never noted. But there never can be any real doubt as to where each bit of property begins and ends, and that is a great boon.

Some of the educated lads of the Mission have got employment in the Survey Department, and find it an interesting sphere. Its only drawback for Christians is, that they are liable to be out in camp for months at a time in regions where Christian privileges are not to be had, or only at a great distance.

Disputes concerning the ownership of property lead to a good deal of that constant litigation which is such a curse in India, but which gives employment to innumerable lawyers of various grades. A young Indian barrister, who was proposing to go to a certain town to exercise his legal profession, explained to me why it was likely to be a favourable locality. The people, he said, were for the most part well-to-do, and that always meant a great deal of quarrelling concerning money

and land. But they were at the same time very ignorant, and easily duped. He gave the following instance of the sort of thing which takes place:—A man comes into the "pleader," or lawyer's office, for a consultation. The pleader says: "Now, what sort of law shall I give you? If I take it out of this book" (taking up a black volume), "it will cost ten rupees. But if you want to have the best law out of this book" (taking up a red volume), "it will cost twenty rupees." The applicant probably agrees to take the twenty-rupee law out of the red volume, naturally thinking that the best law is the safest, even if it costs more.

It has been said that if you chance to hear two Indians talking together, the word "money," or something relating to it, will almost invariably be heard. In our crowded rural road, as villagers go to and fro in pairs or groups, I have often tested the truth of this proverbial saying. It is undoubtedly the case that perhaps in nine cases out of ten they are discussing past or prospective earnings, or some difficulty or quarrel connected with money matters. But this does not necessarily indicate a love of money in the Western sense of the expression. The majority of people in India are poor. The struggle even for the small sum required for daily bread is often acute. The conditions under which the majority of the poorer class of people have to do their work has been already described. Hence the injustice which they have received from their employers; hardships

connected with money earned but not paid, or only in part; the ups and downs of the daily struggle for bread; these naturally form the burning questions of the day, and they are the natural topics of conversation amongst men and women. The very scarcity of money intensifies the temptation to think too much of it when it has been acquired. It is not uncommon to hear the critic of the Indian Christian say that he cares too much for money. On the whole, it would probably be true to say that he does not err more in this respect than the average Christian of the West. But he happily retains a good deal of natural simplicity of character and does not pretend to be different to what he really is, so that when he is importunate for a rise of salary he does not think it necessary to beat about the bush, or to appear to blush.

It is sometimes urged that though natives may dislike the often brusque manner of some Englishmen, they are more than compensated by getting in exchange English honesty and fair dealing. It is to be feared that this boast has its limitations. In a country where it is so difficult to find out what is the proper price of any article, because the vendor almost habitually asks far more than he expects to get, the new-comer naturally begins by paying too much. But after he has become aware of this he is apt to go into the opposite extreme, and he begins to pride himself on his cleverness in making bargains with

the natives, and he often ends by paying too little, both for what he buys and for work done. There are even mission workers who have got their influence discredited in this way. The strength of his standing as a European makes it almost impossible for an ordinary native to get redress, if he has been wronged in his dealings with an Englishman. Servants often suffer a good deal from petty injustice.

CHAPTER XXXIII

EAST AND WEST TRAVELLING

Indian railway travellers. English rudeness; instances of this. Seeing off the Collector; his exclusiveness. The "white man's ship." Courtesy of Indians. The European and Eurasian compartment.

It is when travelling by train that East and West are most liable to tread on each other's toes. Formerly first- and second-class carriages were used almost exclusively by Europeans. Of late years the number of Indians travelling in these classes has greatly increased. This is partly because at one time all passengers were subject to medical inspection, in order to see whether they were suffering from plague or not, but those who were not travelling third-class got many exemptions in the process. Also the well-to-do Indian has gradually got into the habit of travelling second-class in order to escape the mixed crowd of the Indian third-class, where he may find himself compelled to sit next a low-caste man whose touch may defile him.

On the other hand, they often meet with a great deal of rudeness from certain English people, who resent the intrusion of a "native" into their

carriage. Even some men who ought to know better are guilty in this respect. But it should also be remembered that men of very little education or refinement come out to India for the sake of the higher pay and position which they can secure in a variety of spheres. Some men of this stamp are apt to give themselves great airs, and they think to show their importance by their rudeness to the people of the country.

I once saw a man of this type in a railway carriage shove an Indian to one side with considerable violence, and take his seat. The Indian was a refined gentleman, much his superior both by birth and education, and speaking English excellently. He was reading a volume of Mark Twain for his recreation in the train. Although a good deal disturbed by the rudeness which he had received, he did not lose his temper, but remonstrated in emphatic but courteous language.

"'I say, guard, there is a native in this compartment; he must go somewhere else.' That is the kind of speech which hurts our feelings," said an Indian gentleman to me, who was my companion in the train for two nights and a day. "And yet," he said, "that is the sort of thing I am frequently subjected to, because I have to travel a good deal. Is it to be wondered at if we don't feel much love towards Englishmen, when they treat us in this way?"

I saw a Scotch doctor, engaged on plague inspection duty at a railway station, kick with

savage violence a porter who accidently got in his way on the platform.

If you see a little crowd of bowing, smiling, well-dressed Indians at a station, gathered round a young Englishman in a sun tope, who is talking to them affably, and trying not to look embarrassed by the garland of flowers which they have put round his neck, you may know that it is probably the Collector, or Commissioner, of the district, who is being seen off by some of his constituents. The one or two attendants in blue coats and red turbans, and sashes with large brass plates upon them, waiting in the background, are the messengers, with which all Government officials are liberally supplied. The Collector is the practical ruler of the locality over which he is set to preside, and situations are constantly arising which demand a great deal of tact and wise judgment. That Collectors frequently win, not only the respect, but also the confidence and regard of the people over whom they have been set, is an instance of the capacity of the young Englishman, who is in earnest, to rise up to his responsibilities.

Nevertheless he remains an Englishman for all that. A Collector whom I knew, having had his usual "send off," travelled in the next carriage to myself. At a roadside station a Hindu judge made for the first-class carriage in which the Collector had established himself. Although he had been exceedingly courteous to the Indian gentry who had seen him off, he bitterly resented

the intrusion of the Hindu judge. The latter was not to be rebuffed, and was determined to exercise his right to travel in a carriage in which there was plenty of room. The Collector accordingly called his servant, indignantly gathered up his belongings, and, having first come to the window of my carriage to tell me of his troubles, took refuge in some other part of the train.

"Well, this is a pretty state of things, when you find a native in a cabin!" said a young military officer to me, when he saw an Indian go into the adjoining cabin on board ship. "If he has paid for his berth, he has a right to it," I said; "besides, he is not in your cabin." "Well I did think that a P. & O. was a white man's ship," replied the young officer with great bitterness.

"No doubt you missionaries have learnt to get over the prejudice," said a delightful young army captain to me on board the same ship, "and I suppose it is very wrong of me; but I positively *hate* a black man."

Though there are certain drawbacks connected with some native passengers, they are much more courteous than the average Englishman is, even to his own countrymen. The stranger, who at some wayside station, intrudes into a carriage already sufficiently full, does not expect to be welcomed. At night the large clerical sun hat meets with a specially cold reception from the Englishman, who peeps out at the intruder from beneath his blankets. But the Indian traveller will assure you that there

is plenty of room. He will cheerfully help you with your luggage, clearing away his own belongings in order to make space for yours; and on one occasion an Indian insisted on my taking his berth, while he himself sat up on a corner of a seat for the rest of the night.

However good the intentions of kindly Englishmen may be when travelling, it is almost impossible to avoid the appearance of acquiescing in arrangements which are trying to the Indian. On most lines there are third-class compartments reserved for Europeans and Eurasians. The arrangement is not merely to protect the Englishman from the intrusion of native fellow-passengers. The Hindu is at least equally unwilling to have the white man as an intruder in his own part of the train, and it is generally understood that just as the native must not trespass into the European compartments, so on his part the Englishman should keep out of the carriages allotted to Indians.

Not being able to find the usual European compartment on a certain train, I asked the young Eurasian ticket-collector whereabouts it was. "There is not one on the train," he said, "but I will soon make one." And going to one of the native compartments, already fairly filled with people, he said rudely and roughly: "Here, I say, you have all got to clear out of that." The Eurasian is inclined to imitate what he thinks to be correct English style, by talking in a blustering way to those whom he contemptuously styles

"natives." The Indians, slowly and unwillingly, but silently, transferred themselves and their many belongings to another carriage, and then they saw three members of the ruling race take their places in a carriage seated for twenty-eight.

CHAPTER XXXIV

CUSTOMS OF EAST AND WEST

The up-to-date Hindu traveller; his outfit. Habits of East and West so different. The English toothbrush. The Indian's toilet; its publicity. Women's dress. Taking food with the fingers; defence of the custom; the touch of the meat-eater. Servants of Europeans. English hospitality restricted by caste. The Rajah's dinner-party. Instance of mutual misunderstanding. Regrettable results of rudeness. The true religion unites.

In spite of the fact that East and West do not always hit it off happily together when travelling, it is then, more than at any other time, that the up-to-date Hindu tries to follow European customs. His bedding, his pillows, his rug-straps, his tin travelling trunk, are all modelled on English lines; although excess of colour and ornamentation indicate Indian taste, and the articles themselves partake either of the flimsy nature of most Indian modern productions, or else they are cheap goods from Europe made expressly for the foreign market. He is nicely dressed in European clothes, but he wears a turban which he takes off and puts up on the rack, just as the Englishman does with his sun tope, displaying either a pigtail of varying dimensions, or else hair cut in English fashion, and the pigtail so

reduced that it is invisible. He has a watch which he often consults, and he is interested in the punctuality or otherwise of the train, and will perhaps verify this by frequent reference to his time-table. Possibly he will amuse himself by reading an English magazine or novel from the bookstall. Yet, in spite of this outward conformity to the English model, he is still as completely an Indian, and as little of an Englishman, as when he wore his *dhota*, or even when he thought his loin-cloth sufficient clothing. The result of this is that, except where the crowded state of the train makes it impossible, the Englishman and the Indian as a rule naturally gravitate into different compartments, not from mutual antipathy, but because the habits of the two nations are so different that travelling together makes practical difficulties.

The nature of some of these mutual difficulties may be indicated. Indians are extremely particular about cleaning their teeth. But the English custom of using a toothbrush, which is only renewed after a period of uncertain duration, is looked upon by the Indian as a most objectionable practice. To retain, and to carry about with you in your bag an instrument which has been used for such a purpose, he feels to be an indication of great want of refinement. His own "toothbrush" is the first finger of his right hand, sometimes supplemented by a small twig taken from a certain tree, which twig he throws away after the operation. The process is carried out with immense energy, and it is accom-

panied by alarming guttural sounds. The manipulator has with him a brass vessel, from which he takes deep draughts of water, which he squirts out again with great force. He generally chooses a public place for this toilet operation, such as the front doorstep of his house in a crowded street. The extraordinary publicity given to many domestic matters, with which we are accustomed to associate the idea of privacy, tries the feelings of the Englishman just as much as the sensibilities of the Indian are shocked by the permanent toothbrush.

To the new-comer from England the dress of the average Indian woman looks rather scanty. But, on the other hand, the skirts of English ladies, sometimes trailing behind them, and possibly gathering up unknown defilements, awaken in the Indian feelings of disgust.

No Hindu, of whatever rank, would ever think of taking food in his own country except with his fingers. In serving rice and other food to guests at a feast, the hand is always the agent used for the purpose. Indian Christians, except the few who have become completely Europeanised, rarely take their food in any other way. The arguments used by an Indian in defence of the custom were reasonable. "We always wash," he said, "before we eat, so we know that everybody's hand is clean. And after the meal, before we go to other duties, we wash our hands again. You, on the contrary," he went on to say, "eat with spoons and forks which have been in the mouths of hundreds of

different people. You leave them to be cleaned by servants who often do the work carelessly, and who are perhaps dirty themselves."

Using fingers habitually, instead of spoons and forks, is popularly looked upon as indicative of rudimentary civilisation. But it should be added that those who have always been accustomed to eat with their fingers do so with dexterity and neatness. And no one who has seen Indians at their meals would be disposed to say that this method of eating suggests the idea of lack of refinement. But to eat rice elegantly with the fingers needs that your Indian social education should have begun in early childhood.

The Hindu's objection to having his food or water touched by Christians or people of low-caste arose, not so much from any notion of inferiority of station, but chiefly from the nature of the food of these classes. It was the touch of the meat-eater, in the days when the Hindu was more strict in his observances than he is now, which brought pollution. Contact with Christians was obnoxious because they eat all kinds of meat, including the sacred cow. Low-caste Hindus were much to be avoided, because they even eat animals which have died from natural causes. The Hindu servants of most Europeans are chiefly drawn from the ranks of this class, because they are the only Hindus who are willing to handle dishes containing the uncanny food of the Englishman.

Nowadays meat is eaten more or less frequently,

either openly or in secret, by nearly all classes. But to the orthodox Hindu it is a matter of wonder that we allow people of what he considers a degraded class to minister to our wants. The native women who act as ladies' maids and nurses, and who are said to be handy and adept, are mostly drawn from the same class, and many Indians are puzzled that an Englishman should be willing that his wife and children should be ministered to by these women.

Governors and other important Government officials make formal calls on leading Hindus in native cities, and stay for ten minutes or so talking polite platitudes, and the Hindu in return puts in an appearance at the Governor's levee. But this, though good as far as it goes, does not do much towards bringing about real mutual understanding. The caste restrictions, which make it impossible for an orthodox Hindu to take food with a Christian, add greatly to the difficulty. A dinner-party in which English and Indians were judiciously intermixed, if it were possible, would do much towards bridging over the gulf. When Indian Rajahs entertain English guests, which they do in English style on a most lavish scale and with truly princely hospitality, the host himself cannot share in the meal, and only puts in an appearance at the end of the banquet to take part in the speech-making.

Here is a curious instance of a complete misunderstanding, arising entirely from the

different customs of East and West. A Brahmin student told me, as an example of the intolerance of the British, that a young Indian friend of his in London had been requested by an English family to leave the house because he had bare feet. I asked for particulars, and the Brahmin said that the young Indian, having a letter of introduction to this family, went to present it. As the day was very hot, while he was waiting in the drawing-room he took off his shoes and stockings. In his own country this would have been a perfectly natural thing to do. In fact, in his own home ordinary politeness would have made him leave his shoes at the door. The maidservant who had ushered him in, returning for some purpose, was amazed to see what the visitor had done, and went and reported the fact to her mistress. She, probably thinking that they had either a madman or a would-be thief to deal with, sent to request him to leave the house, which he did indignantly, and wrote to his friends in India to tell them how he had been insulted by the proud English.

The rudeness of the thoughtless or ill-bred Englishman is very regrettable, because it is productive of that feeling of soreness which lies at the bottom of a great deal of the smouldering discontent which, from time to time, makes itself apparent amongst the upper classes in India. And some of the younger Indian men try to retaliate

as far as they dare, by being in their turn off-hand and cheeky. There are indications that the same sort of spirit is spreading to some of the lower classes, which might easily become a source of serious danger. Anyhow it tends to make the process of amalgamation between the two races increasingly difficult and slow.

There is a great charm about many Indians, and by those who set themselves in earnest to understand them and to cultivate their friendship, a great deal of happy progress can be made. But it must always be remembered that there cannot be complete unity of heart without the true religion, and it is only by their mutual incorporation into the household of God that Indians and Englishmen will become one nation.

CHAPTER XXXV

SERVANTS IN INDIA

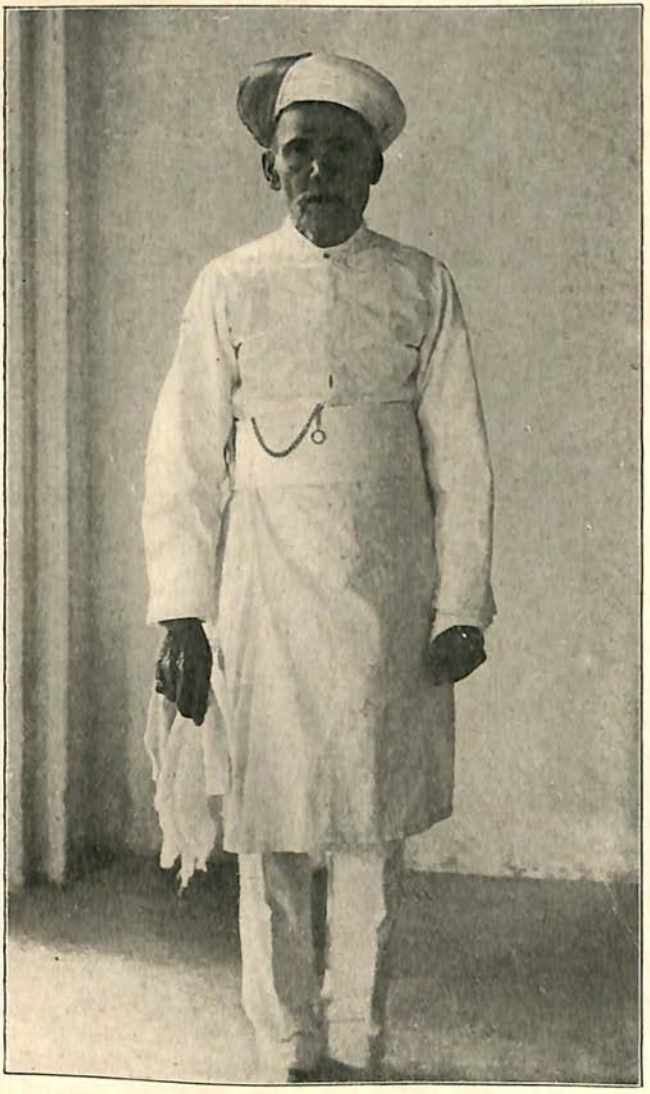
Government officials and missions. The honest native Christian. Christian servants. Housekeeping in India. The heathen butler. The *Dasara* festival. Countenance of Hinduism. The visitors to Parbatti. The festival of the cattle. S. Anthony's Day.

THERE are a few Government officials in India who are not disposed to smile on missionary enterprise, or on those engaged in it. They think that natives had better be left to themselves, so far as religion is concerned, and that the efforts of the missionary are a disturbing element; and his reasonable complaints to officials of this type about ordinary matters, such as the state of the roads in his district, or the supply of water, often meet with slight recognition, or none at all. How far this attitude on the part of the official may be due to the faults, or want of tact of the missionary, I cannot say. Want of appreciation of what missions are doing for the people of a country often arises merely from lack of knowledge, and most Government officials show generous recognition of the work, and give it their kindly

aid, when they come into real contact with it and its results.

It was a pleasant relief from the stereotyped "board-ship" saying, that all native Christians are rascals, to hear the following from one of the engineers of the great irrigation system of the Panjab. In the course of ordinary conversation he happened to say that, in all his experiences, he had only met with one really honest native, and that he was a Christian. "In fact," he went on to say, "the other men led him such a life, just because he was honest, that I had to transfer him to a new district." This testimony was the more significant, because there is no sphere in which there are greater opportunities of exacting unlawful commission than in the department which deals with the distribution of water.

The common criticism of the casual Englishman, when he is talking about missions, that a Hindu servant is better than a Christian one, has an element of truth in it. That is to say, the Christian servant will not be so submissive as the heathen one. His Christianity has developed his grit, and he will be less willing to put up with injustice, or violent language, or the habit, once common but now almost universally reprobated, of cutting his pay as a punishment for offences real or imaginary. He will not be quite so ready to be on duty for unlimited periods at his master's pleasure, and he will expect to be allowed time to go to church. Some of these new characteristics



THE INDIAN BUTLER.

[*To face p.* 242.

may be of the nature of defects, but they also mean that he is more of a man than he was in his heathen days. And as regards honesty and general trustworthiness, although every Indian Christian is not altogether impeccable, he is on a completely different plane to his heathen comrade. It is also an unspeakable relief, to anyone whose Christianity is something more than form, to have Christian servants round about you.

Housekeeping in India is either difficult or very easy, according to the view that is taken of the moral responsibility of a householder. If you feel it a duty, or if poverty compels you, to endeavour not to allow yourself to be cheated, the process of housekeeping will become a contest between you and your heathen servants in which, in spite of your vigilance, you will be continually worsted. If, on the other hand, you are reconciled not to worry much about prices, and if you do not grudge the traditional gifts of certain seasons, you can obtain what is probably the most efficient and devoted service in the world. Your head-servant will take the entire responsibility of your establishment. When he has learnt what your wishes are, he will see that his underlings carry them out to the letter. Meals will be admirably served, and you will be waited on noiselessly and graciously. Your own unpunctuality, your unreasonableness, the sudden arrival of unexpected guests, none of these things will disturb the admirable serenity of your Hindu or Mohammedan

Indian butler. And whatever the emergency, you will find him equal to the occasion. But in return for this, you must not grumble because at every turn, and in every transaction, he is privately supplementing his official income.

Those who employ Christian servants would do well to remember that they ought to take care to pay them somewhat in excess of the small wages which will satisfy a Hindu. Otherwise they will find it difficult to live, and may be tempted to practise the same methods by which the heathen servant probably doubles his receipts.

There is a popular Hindu festival called the *Dasara*, and this is one of the days when stable-servants expect to be tipped, unless they know that their master disapproves of Hindu ceremonies. On that day horses are decorated and garlanded, and the grooms bring them round to the front verandah of the bungalow in order to obtain the expected recognition. Care needs to be taken to see that, in the desire to be kind, a sort of tacit countenance of Hinduism is not involved. English visitors to India unthinkingly are sometimes remiss in this respect. There is a hill just outside Poona City called Parbatti. It is a well-known centre of idol worship, and for this reason many visitors climb up it out of curiosity, but also to see the view. One of the custodians of the temples, after showing an English priest the idols, etc., asked for a contribution towards "the support of the temple," as he expressed it. And in spite of the

terms in which the request was couched, the priest gave an offering, to the astonishment of his better instructed lay companion.

Hindus have a festal day for their cattle, called *Bile polar*, on which they give them extra food; their horns are coloured and decorated with gold paper and long tassels made of the fibrous roots of a shrub, and a variety of devices are imprinted on their bodies in red paint, generally circles or the outstretched hand. The biggest bull of the chief man of the village sometimes wears a sort of crown, or some farmer who is well-to-do drapes his best cattle in ornamental cloths, reaching nearly to the ground on each side. The people also set up clay models of cattle in their houses at this season, to which they do reverence. When the cattle have been decorated they are driven, with shouting and noise, up to a temple; and the fact that it is their festal day does not save them from the whacks which the boys bestow upon them freely in order to hurry them on. Some of their owners go into the temple and worship the god, and soon afterwards the cattle are driven back with the same demonstrations to their respective homes.

It used to be the custom (and perhaps may be still) for horses to be driven past the Pope on the Feast of S. Anthony (the patron saint of animals), and he blessed them as they went by. It is good that the creatures who do us faithful service should be gratefully remembered. The Hindu festival of the animals might possibly

be Christianised. Their generous rations and their gay decorations, with the exception of the paint marks on their bodies, are customs which might be retained, and they might be brought in joyful procession to the church door on S. Anthony's Day to be blessed by the parish priest.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE EDUCATED HINDU

Education divorced from religion. Its effects on character; instance of this in Babaji. Wealth will not purchase social position. The new bungalow. Quarrels with the contractor. Indians nervous about thieves. Night raids. Robberies amongst plague refugees. Skilful thieves. Babaji's inconsistency; removing his neighbour's landmark. The future of the bungalow. Airy houses unpopular. Preference for apparent discomfort.

THERE are many opportunities in India of studying the effect on character of education when divorced from religion. The effect on a few has been that the cultivation of their mental gifts in secular study has helped them to understand and assimilate Christian truth. Others, with a natural propensity for evil, have had their capacities for mischief quickened by the varied knowledge which they acquired. But with the vast majority of Indians, and more especially Hindus, English secular education does not alter their character, and except for the assumption of a few European externals, they remain exactly the same as they were before. Even many of those who go to England, if they do not take up some definite profession on their return, drop back so entirely

into their former manner of life that you would hardly suppose it credible that they had ever been out of their own country.

If you live amongst the people you will frequently meet with examples of this kind of thing. And it should be observed that it is generally in a man's ordinary everyday life that his real nature comes out. Here is an illustration:—A Hindu, who was by caste a brass-worker, had been for some years in the important position of assistant collector. His father having been a good English scholar and a great reader of books, both in that language and in Marathi, had given his son an education which enabled him to rise to the responsible post which he ultimately filled. He, in his turn, educated his sons carefully, and they knew English well. The family possessed houses and land, so that, together with the father's official income, they were well off.

But in India wealth will not purchase social position, as it does to some degree in the West. Money is not powerful enough to override caste. The members of this family, whom we will call Babaji, did their best to pose as high-caste people, and were ready to dispense lavish hospitality if it would have been accepted; but Brahmins ignored them, and they never seemed to associate on equal terms with anyone except members of their own caste, or those below it.

When the father of the family retired on his

pension, he returned to his own district and prepared to settle down. Besides a house in the city, they had a sufficiently habitable one in a large garden in a village in the Poona district. But the old grandfather had died in this country house, and was said to haunt it. Servants refused to stay there, and none of the family would live there. So they pulled it down and prepared to build a new house in another garden.

I had an opportunity of watching the whole progress of this project, and it gave me a good deal of insight into the character that Hinduism creates. Babaji having seen something of English ways during his term of office as collector, prepared to build the sort of house which would suit an Englishman. It was conveniently planned, and had many doors and windows and large verandahs. He also employed a contractor of some repute. The house was quickly built, and would have been an excellent one in all respects but for certain economies which Babaji insisted on, to the great indignation of the contractor. He bought a set of old doors and windows from a house in Bombay which was being pulled down, and had them adapted to his new bungalow. And having been accustomed to deal with petty contractors, with whom it is customary to carry on a perpetual war of words, he tried the same plan with his present builder, and whenever he came to inspect, railed at him for faulty work and bad materials.

I asked him why he did this, when there was

nothing to justify his complaints. He said that it was the only way of keeping men up to their work. There is also an underlying idea that if the cry of faulty construction is uttered with sufficient persistency, it will give an excuse for cutting down the final bill. Babaji made an effort in this direction also, but the contractor said that unless he got his money he should take the matter into court, and refused to have anything more to do with the job. After much fierce wrangling, the latter came triumphantly one day to show me the cheque which Babaji had just written for him.

So Babaji was left to finish off his bungalow in his own way, and I think that on the whole he was rather glad, because he could now do things more in accordance with his own ideas. The English type of bungalow is not really suited to Indian taste. A dark, windowless house with an earthen floor is where the ordinary Indian feels most at home. The first thing that Babaji did when left to himself was to put iron bars to the windows to keep out thieves, and to close in the fronts of his verandahs in the same way, so that they looked like cages in the Zoological Gardens. Most Indians live in constant dread of nocturnal thieves, and their fear is not entirely without justification. In years gone by the raids made by robbers in villages were sufficiently alarming. These depredators went to great lengths in their efforts to induce women to declare where

their gold and silver ornaments were hidden. The threat to cut off their nose was not an empty one, if we can trust the statement that in those days the sight of a woman thus disfigured was not uncommon.

More efficient police supervision has done much to prevent these organised raids, although they are still not unknown. But ordinary night thieves are apt to come along wherever they think there is plunder, and this type of Indian thief is as skilful in reality as he is proverbially said to be. The habit of hiding money, instead of investing it usefully, or the common custom of turning it into ornaments for women, makes the visit of a thief to the house of a well-to-do Indian likely to be lucrative.

When people moved out from the city because of plague and camped in the surrounding villages, they were much troubled by thieves. The refugees were afraid to leave their valuables in their shut-up homes in the city, lest the house should be raided in their absence; and yet, lodging in tents and frail huts, it was very difficult to circumvent the robbers. Many people camped as close as they could get to the Mission settlement at Yerandawana, under the idea that thieves avoid the neighbourhood of Europeans. Nevertheless an extraordinarily clever robbery took place in a hut exactly opposite the Mission gateway. This hut was built of split bamboos tied to a wooden framework and then plastered with mud. A house of this kind, care-

fully put together, affords good shelter, and when the mud peels off it can easily be repaired. A widow with her sister and little daughter lived in this shelter during plague time. Their fortunes were invested in the precarious form of personal jewellery. At night these ornaments were put into two boxes, which they placed under the cot on which one of the women slept, in order, as they thought, to be quite secure against thieves. In spite of this precaution they woke up one morning to find their treasure gone. Thieves had dug under the walls of the house and had made an opening large enough to creep through. How they were able to do this without waking the inmates, and how they took the boxes from under the bed and got away with them unobserved, a light having been kept burning in the room, is one of the mysteries of Indian crime. The boxes were found, broken open and empty, a few fields off, but the thieves were never detected. I myself saw the burrow through which they got in.

Babaji had built his new bungalow immediately behind two dilapidated cottages, in which he had sometimes lodged during brief visits to the country. Everyone took for granted that he would pull down these cottages when the new house was ready. They abutted on to the front verandah, and occupied the ground which would naturally form the approach to the house. But when Babaji, with pardonable pride, was showing me round the completed house, he told me that he had decided

to retain the two cottages; they would be useful as cookroom and storeroom; besides, they had been built by his father, and so out of respect to his memory he would wait till they fell down of themselves. I represented to him what a barbaric arrangement it was, but without effect, and next day he was busy making a passage-way from the new bungalow into one of the old cottages.

His next exploit was to try and acquire a strip of land by removing his neighbour's landmark. Babaji wanted to build stables and other out-buildings. In digging his foundations he purposely encroached about four feet over his boundary line. When the owner remonstrated he endeavoured by bluster to carry the thing through. He pointed to a bogus boundary stone of his own planting, and called in the village clerk to certify that there was an error in the village map, and that the real boundary line was as Babaji represented it to be; the average Hindu village clerk being ready to certify anything you like, if you make it worth his while to do so. The owner of the land seated himself on the disputed plot and defied the workmen to continue their operations. The dispute continued for some days, waxing more and more furious, until the owner and the contractor at last came to blows—a form of demonstration which in India is impressive in appearance, but the amount of damage done is infinitesimal. I was then asked to act as arbitrator in the case. I declined; but I told Babaji that he was totally in the wrong.

Finally, after all this waste of time and temper, he gave up the struggle and withdrew his forces to within the proper limit.

That a man of education, who had himself been a magistrate, should have made this attempt to filch a strip of land off his neighbour might seem unaccountable. But his natural Indian characteristics, when circumstances prompted it, came uppermost, and his English training for the time being went to the wall.

The new bungalow proved after all to be a white elephant. The water-supply was limited, and without plenty of water Babaji said he could not live there. His servants, who were city people, said that if he went to live in the country they would not go with him. So the bungalow awaits the day, which we sometimes dream of, when it may fall into our hands and become a convalescent home for Indians, which is a great need, and for which it is admirably adapted.

Houses built by English missionaries for Indian mission workers are, as a rule, not at all the kind of abode which the tenants really like. A row of cottages, built some years ago in Poona City for Indian Christians, has never been popular; chiefly because, besides many doors and windows, there are ventilators in the roof which cannot be closed. In more than one mission school some of the doors and windows have had to be permanently bricked up, because both teachers and children complained so much of the cold. Visions of tidy cottages for

Indian Christians gradually get dispelled. Here and there a home-like dwelling is to be found, but they are scarce. A young married girl, who had been brought up in refined surroundings and had an unusually comfortable home when first married, had to live for a time in the open sheds and apparent discomfort of a plague camp. Instead of disliking it she settled in with great contentment, cooked her own dinner in the open, and was evidently more at home than in her well-built house. This also, as time went on, gradually lost its original look of comfort. Hens, and goats, and cow-dung cakes, and rubbish of all sorts by degrees got the upper hand, and proportionate to the increase of apparent discomfort was the increase of contentment in the minds of the young couple who lived there.

CHAPTER XXXVII

UNFINISHED PLANS IN INDIA

Houses begun and never completed. The projected laundry. Abandoned wells. Shunker sinks a well; he gets tired of it; failure of his second well; begins again at his first well; destructive blasting operations; finally gives up the plan.

THE marks left of projects begun but never finished is a common and discouraging sight in India. There is scarcely a village which does not bear evidence of this. A man prepares to build a new house. You are astonished at the large blocks of stone, neatly cut and well laid, with which he commences. If you ask him about it, he will tell you of the beautiful superstructure which is to come on the top of the plinth which he is now building. But after a while the work begins to slacken; the men employed gradually diminish in number. You ask the cause, and various reasons will be assigned—scarcity of stone, lack of water, and the like. Finally the work ceases, probably never to be resumed. The owner has got tired of the project, or, not having counted the cost, the treasury has run dry. Sometimes after a long delay, he will build a miserable mud-house on the

top of his handsome stone plinth. But in innumerable villages you will find examples of unfinished houses which have remained in that condition for generations.

In Poona City there are conspicuous instances of the same thing. Nearly all the better-class native houses are very substantially framed in wood, the spaces within the frames being filled in with bricks, set in either mud or mortar, according to the quality of the house. The framework of a two- or three-storied house is often completed, sometimes including the roof and tiling, before the brickwork has been commenced. In different parts of the city may be seen the framework of large and handsome houses which have never advanced beyond that stage, and have remained for years melancholy-looking skeletons.

Hindus often have projects which are purely castles in the air, and it is difficult to know whether the projector is deceiving himself, or whether it is merely in the spirit of boastfulness, that he speaks of the great things that he is going to do. A middle-aged Brahmin called at the Yerandawana Mission bungalow and said that he was going to start a laundry on a large scale in the village. It was to be thoroughly up to date. He was going to get the most modern machinery from America. He would only accept as customers those who sent to the wash at least a dozen articles a week. The two- or three-article man

he should refuse. He had called, he said, to solicit the custom of the Boys' Home. We were able to give him, readily enough, a qualified promise of support, and from that day to this we have heard no more of the modern laundry.

There is no more valuable asset in rural India than a good well. Hence many landowners begin to sink one. But with the propensity to begin and not to finish, there are multitudes of unfinished, and therefore useless, wells. There is a wide stretch of land between the Mission field at Yerandawana and the low range of hills on which the boys are so fond of rambling. It is only water which is wanted to make this tract productive. Dependent as it now is on the uncertain rainfall of the monsoon, an occasional and ragged crop, which often never comes into ear, is all that it ever produces. More often than not the farmers who own the property do not think it worth the labour and expense of cultivation. Two attempts have been made to sink wells, and both have been abandoned for years. In the case of one of these wells at least, water had actually been reached, and if they had gone down a little deeper there was every probability of an adequate supply. But abandoned schemes are hardly ever taken up again, and these two wells will remain unfinished to the end of time.

A near neighbour, whom we will call Shunker, determined to sink a well. He discoursed to me at great length on the advantage of being inde-

pendent of the canal water for the irrigation of his land. He also described the powerful pump, worked by a windmill, which would supersede the old-fashioned method of raising water by means of bullocks.

The sinking of the well commenced with great energy. Shunker remained on the spot the whole day in order to see that the men did not idle. Friends and neighbours came and sat around and advised, and speculated how soon they would reach water. Shunker was confident that a depth of 15 feet would be sufficient. The ground, however, was very hard, and the men soon reached solid rock and blasting became necessary. Shunker was full of importance over this, and before an explosion took place rushed up and down the road in great excitement, warning travellers to halt. His interest in the well continued until the commencement of the rainy season obliged him to knock off for a while.

But when the time came to resume operations Shunker's zeal had begun to flag. The well was already 15 feet deep and there was no sign of water, except that which had fallen during the monsoon. Shunker was growing uneasy at the amount of money which he had spent. Work was resumed, but only languidly. Then there came gaps of several weeks when no work was done at all, and finally it stopped altogether, and the scheme was apparently abandoned. Shunker, not knowing what to do with the piles of stone which

had accumulated from his excavation, erected an immense shed with it in his yard, which he said would give shelter to his bullocks. But it was piled up unskilfully, and being without mortar, it soon became a ruin.

Indians do not always profit by experience. It might be supposed that Shunker would hardly care to risk further experiments concerning wells. But following the advice of his father, an apparently shrewd man, he sunk another well in another garden. This time a European firm took the contract, and the cost was heavy. The spot chosen necessitated an unusually high platform for the bullocks who raise the water, which added a good deal to the expense. But a fatal mistake was made in the spot chosen for the well. It was sunk close to the bank of a river whose bed was many feet below it, and though they tapped a spring which would probably have provided a good store of water, it soon found its way out of the well to the lower level of the river, and the amount of water which remained was never deep enough to be of use. So this rather imposing-looking empty well stands as a conspicuous monument of an ill-advised scheme, involving total loss of the money that it cost.

Somehow the failure of this second well stimulated Shunker, contrary to expectations, to recommence work at his first well, and in order that the job should be done thoroughly, he enlisted the aid of the sappers and miners to conduct the

blasting operations. The result was that the Mission compound adjoining became like Ladysmith during the siege. The explosions were terrific, and stones, some of large size, fell in all parts of the compound. A bit of rock fell on the stable, smashing a dozen tiles. Another stone travelled an immense distance, and falling on the Sisters' bungalow, broke three of the large Mangalore tiles, so famous in India for their rainproof qualities, but proving themselves unequal to the resistance of bombs. Urgent remonstrances were for a time unavailing. Shunker called, and in polite English expressed his great sorrow that his operations should have caused us annoyance. But the siege continued with unabated vigour. At last the actual bit of rock which contained the charge rose out of the well to a great height at the time of the explosion, and then half buried itself in the ground immediately behind the schoolmaster's house. If it had chanced to fall on anybody it would have killed him on the spot. The display of this piece of rock had the desired effect, and the sappers and miners were withdrawn. The work was continued in more homely fashion with ordinary blasting powder. With this the process is slower, but it is effective, and does not devastate the surrounding neighbourhood.

None, however, of Shunker's efforts to procure water prospered, in spite of his persevering attempts, which he carried to the extent of rash-

ness. He went on sinking his well until he had reached a great depth, but there were no more signs of water at the end than there were at the beginning, and he finally abandoned the search.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

GIFTS IN INDIA

The purchase of land. A plot for a cemetery; the Patel gives one. The Registrar's Court. The gift in jeopardy. Deed successfully executed. The Patel suffers persecution. Consecration of the cemetery. The Patel's chair. Hindus and gifts. Demand for tips. Hindu boys dissatisfied.

BUYING land in India is generally a troublesome business, and difficulties are multiplied when it is required for missionary purposes, because although the owner may be willing to sell, he is often coerced not to part with his land by his co-religionists, who, as they are not going to profit by the transaction, can afford to adopt a high hand concerning it.

It took some years to secure a plot of ground for the burial of Christians in the village of Yerandawana. A cemetery is not welcomed as a near neighbour in any part of the world, and in India particularly there are many additional prejudices which have to be taken into account. Amongst these, there is a vague idea that it is unlucky to sell land for such an object, and that it may result in the early death of the vendor, or some member of his family.

It has been explained that this village is *inam* to a mosque in Poona City. Hence Government has only the same sort of control over village affairs that it has over those of a native state, and there is no Government land in the place. But the Collector gave the Patel a friendly hint that he had better look round and see whether some suitable plot for a Christian cemetery could not be found. He did so, and an excellent site on one of his own fields proved to be available. It was on gently sloping ground at the foot of a low range of hills, quite away from any habitations, but easily accessible because an ancient right-of-way led up to it.

The finding of a site, however, did not mean that all difficulties were solved. Prettily situated as it was, and commanding a charming view, it was a bit of ground useless for agricultural purposes. Even the grass which grew upon it was so coarse and wiry that cattle would not eat it. But the Patel's first suggestion as to price was that Rs.1500 would be a desirable sum, and he went away rather disheartened on being assured that his suggestion was impossible. When he came again, we said that as the plot of ground was to be used for religious purposes it would be best to put aside mercenary ideas and make a free gift of it. The sudden notion struck him as a good one, and he agreed. As we knew that when it became known many Hindus would try and dissuade him from his purpose, we set to

work at once to get the matter officially confirmed; writing to the Collector to tell him of the successful result of the negotiations, and enlisting the services of a lawyer to draw up a proper deed of gift to the church.

All transactions connected with the transfer of land in India have to be signed and sealed publicly in the Registrar's Court, and unless so done the transaction is not binding. The system is excellent in theory, but it is difficult to prevent abuses in its way of working. All the court officials appeared to be Brahmins. Our cemetery case was nearly wrecked in its passage through the Registrar's Court. The proceedings in minor courts where there are no Englishmen are conducted in leisurely fashion, with much desultory talk and waste of time. Although the deed of gift was a simple matter, the attempt to get it registered occupied some hours, and eventually was not accomplished at all that day. During the long time of waiting various people about the court went and talked with the Patel, and our lawyer felt sure that pressure was being put upon him to get him to draw back. Anyhow, it ended by his saying that he was not prepared to sign the deed that day, and that he must consult his friends on some points connected with it.

The lawyer arranged for an early date for a renewed attempt, feeling sure that it was a case of "now" or "never." The Registrar arrived only two hours behind time. The Brahmin

officials were all smiles and affability to me, saying what an excellent act of charity the Patel was performing. The lawyer sat like a hawk over the clerk who was copying out the deed, in order to see that he did not alter it in the process, a trick which, he said, was not uncommon. Watching the business of the court in progress, I felt how completely the more ignorant people were in the hands of the permanent officials, and how easy it would be to get a negotiation doctored to suit one's own ends.

It was with almost surprised relief that at the end of nearly three hours we left the court possessors of the completed document, and the acre of land was now the property of the Church of S. Crispin in perpetuity. Villagers and others had been asking the Patel what he meant by making gifts of land to Christians, and that if he wished to endow temples, why did he not endow the Hindu temple? The Patel was getting shaky, and was beginning to repent his promise. But, the act once accomplished, he was glad that he had done it, and received our thanks with a pleasing combination of pride and shamefacedness.

The legal completion of his charitable act intensified the wrath of his Hindu neighbours. He was not popular in his village. He was weak and vacillating in his attempts at government, and foolish and dissipated in his private life. Not only did they taunt him with giving land to Christians,

and jeer at him as he passed by, but they went to even greater lengths. Stones were flung at his door at night, people gathered opposite his house and made unearthly noises, invitations to ceremonial feasts were withheld, and at last he got so alarmed at the spirit of opposition which he had raised that he made one of the low-caste men of the village, who are under orders to the Patel, accompany him whenever he was out after dark.

The want of perseverance in the Indian nature has, under some circumstances, advantageous results. A spirit of opposition, unless industriously fanned, soon dies down. After a month or two, the cemetery incident had passed out of the minds of the villagers. A stone cross, 15 feet high, had been erected on the site, and in the early morning when the sun shines upon it, this cross is a conspicuous object from the high-road. The holy sign in a prominent spot in a heathen land is a refreshing sight. When the bishop consecrated the cemetery and dedicated the cross, he handed over to the Patel a handsome chair with a gay cushion, as a token of our appreciation of his kindness. In his official position as head of the village he sometimes has to receive Government officers coming to the place on business. But as no one in the village possessed a chair, he had hitherto been obliged apologetically to spread a blanket for his guests to sit upon. Hence a chair of state was a really useful present.

One or two graves were dug in readiness,

according to the custom in Indian cemeteries, because of the rapid burial necessary in a tropical climate. But for more than three years there was no death in the Christian settlement. At last one of the little boys in the Home, described in a letter as "our youngest and our best," died suddenly of plague, and was buried in the new plot, appropriately enough, on Holy Innocents Day, 1911.

Someone asked, "Was the Patel pleased with his chair?" A Hindu is rarely actually pleased with a gift, because, however large it may be, he generally regrets that it is not larger. When it got whispered abroad that the Patel was going to receive a present, he had visions of one of great value. A silver cup, or even one of gold, was discussed as a possible, or even a probable gift. And though he had the grace, unlike some Indians, not to grumble in our presence concerning the nature of the presentation, the comment, "only a chair," was the prevailing sentiment expressed in the village.

A Hindu almost always asks for more. If you are paying a large building account, the contractor will suggest that, because of the excellence of his work, it would be only just and right to give him Rs.100 extra. The driver of a *tonga* almost habitually asks for more, irrespective of what has been given him. Hence people practise the innocent artifice of handing to him somewhat less than his legal fare, and then when he asks for more giving him the balance, and he usually

THE CEMETERY CROSS.

[*To face p.* 268.

goes away quite satisfied. Porters at railway stations unblushingly beg for tips, and remonstrate at the smallness of the gift, and pursue the traveller about the station beseeching him to consider their poverty. If you have been staying in an Indian bungalow, an array of servants gather round at the time of your departure, unless the master of the house has set his face against the stereotyped custom, and by their elaborate salaams and outstretched palms indicate what is expected of you. The disappointed ones follow you down the carriage-drive reminding you of your neglect. When I have sometimes warned servants, who were rather officious in their attentions, that having no money I should not be able to give them anything at the conclusion of my visit, there has generally been a perceptible falling off in their activity. Christian servants do not clamour in this way, and give a pleasant "tank you" when they are given something, and take great care of an impecunious wayfarer.

When Hindu boys ask for pictures, whether you give them one or several, they at once beg for additional ones; and however good the pictures may be, they will often hand them back immediately and say they want better ones. It is only when they have learnt by experience that these tactics generally result in their getting no pictures at all, that they moderate their demands.

CHAPTER XXXIX

PROVERBIAL SAYINGS ABOUT INDIA

Inaccurate statements. Village trades dependent on demand. Platforms for the bird-scarers. Shop lamps of the city. Supposed ascetics. Uncertainty of the monsoon; how it comes. Cold in India; how an Indian deals with it; he cannot work if he is cold. Englishmen and the Indian sun.

THERE are a number of sayings and statements about India and its people which are either inaccurate or misleading, but which have become almost proverbial, and which are copied from book to book, and conveyed to new-comers by word of mouth, and their often mistaken impressions of many simple things are partly caused by the erroneous expressions and descriptions which they have heard or read. It takes the first several years of a residence in India to gradually unlearn the things which have been wrongly learnt. The stray visitor does not stay long enough to get his view straightened out, and when he returns to write his book about India he repeats the off-told tale.

It is often stated in books that in each village a representative of every trade which supplies the ordinary wants of the inhabitants is to be found—such as the barber, carpenter, blacksmith, potter,

cobbler, etc. But there is no rule about this, and it depends, just as it does in English villages, on the size of the place and the demands of trade. In many villages there is no resident barber, and the people depend on the chance visits of one who itinerates. Blacksmiths are, for the most part, wandering people who come and settle down near a village for a few weeks or months, and then, when trade grows dull, move on to a fresh pitch. The potter is now only to be met with here and there. It is a sign of the increasing prosperity of India that brass and copper vessels are largely taking the place of the earthenware cooking-pots. A carpenter is found in almost every village, because petty repairs to farming implements are an everyday need. He is a man of some importance, and wears a sacred thread like a Brahmin.

When travelling in the train from Bombay to Poona for the first time, I noticed here and there in the corner of many fields a sort of litter, about the length of a man, raised on rough poles about six feet high, and on it a mysterious heap of rubbish. I remember vaguely to have read that the bodies of the dead in the East are exposed to be devoured by birds, and I jumped to the conclusion that the platforms were erected for this purpose, and that the heap of rubbish was the remains of the corpse, and that solitary places in remote fields were chosen in order that the dead might not be any annoyance to the living. As a matter of fact, it is only the Parsees who place

their dead on tower-like structures, built for the purpose, to be disposed of by the vultures.

I learnt in due course that these rural platforms are for the use of boys who scare away birds and other creatures from the ripening crops, and I have not unfrequently accepted the hospitable invitation of some of the village boys to climb up on to the platform and share their sport. From their post of vantage they can survey the whole field, and they sling stones with marvellous force and accuracy to whatever quarter the birds are attacking. They also make a din by beating empty oil-tins, and use clappers as the country boys at home do. The heap of rubbish only consists of the leaves and grass which the boys collect to make their seat on the perch more comfortable, because they often keep vigil for the whole of a long day.

The visitor having read that to the Hindu everything is permeated with religion, thinks that everything that he sees has some religious significance. Someone describing his first drive from the Poona station to the Mission-house through the native city at night, said how much moved he was at seeing the little flickering lamps burning before the "idols" in the shops. But a Hindu does not put his household gods in his shop, and the flickering lamp was merely his ordinary shop lamp, which a few years back satisfied his wants. There are some modern inventions which Indians have taken to very readily, and amongst these are the new ways of producing brilliant light, and the old-

fashioned flickering lamp is now hardly to be seen in Poona.

Going out in the early morning a day or so after my first arrival in India, I met three or four men walking silently one behind each other, and wearing what looked something like a coarse brown habit with a cowl, which they had drawn over their heads so that their faces were almost hidden. Having heard so often about Indian ascetics, I looked at them with some curiosity and respect, as being probably of their number. But in the course of the morning I met so many others of the same type, that I began to think I must have made a mistake. The cowl-like habit turned out to be the coarse native blanket, used for so many purposes by rustic Indians, and which they wear in this monastic fashion in the, sometimes chill, early mornings, or when it is wet. Their walking in single file was not in order to assist them in the preservation of perpetual silence, but because jungle footpaths make this mode of progression a necessity, and country folk get so used to walking in this fashion that when they emerge on to the high-road they preserve the same order.

The monsoon, or rainy season, I had been led to suppose began almost invariably on a certain date, and that rain then fell continuously for three months until another fixed day when it left off, after which no more rain fell till the appointed date of the next year. The expression, "the monsoon has burst," which is often seen in the newspapers, suggests the

idea that the advent of the rain is something akin to a deluge produced by the bursting of a great tank. In reality there is, at times, almost as much uncertainty about weather in India as there is in England. The most that can be said is that there are several months in which rain, though possible, is extremely unlikely, and outdoor festivities can be arranged for without those anxious watchings of the heavens which is the lot of the organiser of garden fêtes in England.

But the date of the monsoon, its duration, and its quality, are most uncertain factors and subjects of anxious speculation, and generally of singularly incorrect prophecy. The country also is so large, and its characteristics are so varied, that the monsoon not only does not occur at the same time all over India, but the amount of rainfall varies enormously in localities not far removed from each other. There are parts of India where rain hardly ever falls, and there are other parts where the total rainfall reaches an almost incredible figure. But it would be possible for a skilful wanderer so to travel about India that he would never come under the influence of the monsoon at all.

Nor is its "bursting" otherwise than a rather gradual process. Clouds slowly gather, rumblings of thunder are heard, lightning flashes about the mountain tops with great brilliancy, the air is close and oppressive, there is often violent wind, and dust sweeps into the bungalow in clouds, a few drops of rain fall, and people hope that the

monsoon has begun. But these symptoms are often prolonged for a week or two before the real rain comes, and sometimes the clouds disperse and brilliant sunshine returns for a time. Now and then the monsoon is almost a complete failure in certain areas, and that means famine, proportionate to the area which lacks rain. Even when the monsoon begins in earnest, there is still room for speculation and anxiety. In some years it ceases prematurely, and then the grain either does not come into ear, or else the ears are small and parched.

When a good monsoon commences in sober earnest there is often a combination of high wind and heavy rain which few roofs are proof against, and a good deal of discomfort indoors is the result. After the first day or two the wind generally drops, and a steady perpendicular downpour follows, continuous and heavy according to the locality, and the character of the monsoon in each year. In Poona and its neighbourhood the rain rarely continues for many days in succession, and there come breaks of delightfully bright sunshine. In some years the rainy season is only spread over about two months, but in other years it lasts on and off much longer.

Indians are naturally sensitive to cold. In Western India the thermometer rarely falls very low. Nevertheless the difference between the day and night temperature is so great in some parts, and the fall in temperature in the small hours of the

morning is so rapid, that it gives the impression of a sharp frost, even although the thermometer may have scarcely fallen below 50°. But in the middle of the afternoon of the previous day it may have registered 90° in the shade, and a drop of 40° is keenly felt. In January 1911, without any warning, the temperature one night actually dropped to below freezing, and a film of ice was found in a plate which had been left out all night, to the great astonishment of the boys, and much damage was done to fruit blossom and crops.

The Indian deals with cold in quite a different way to those who have been brought up in northern countries. If you give him a comforter, very little of it goes round his neck, but he wraps his head up in it so that only his eyes and nose are visible, and if his head is warm he does not seem to mind much about the rest of his frame, especially his legs, which are generally bare. But instead of trying to counteract cold by exertion, he delivers himself up to the miseries of the situation. Clad in his scanty linen garments he crouches, and mopes, and shivers, and waits for the sun to rise and warm him. Masons and carpenters and labourers may be seen sitting round about the house which they are building, waiting to get warm, and until that process has been satisfactorily completed they will not touch a tool, however late it may be.

You ask Felix, the boy who sweeps the bungalow, why he has not done it, and he replies, "I was cold." You say, "You will sweep it as

soon as you are warm?" He says, "Of course." And there is nothing more to be said, because it is an understood thing that a cold Indian cannot work. His delight in a fire is intense. People collect leaves and rubbish and make fires by the roadside, or even in the streets, and crowds gather round and sit almost into the blaze, so that it is a wonder that they are not scorched. Their only regret is that the materials for the bonfire are generally so insufficient.

The joy of sitting in the sun to get warm, which the Indian can do with impunity, is denied to the Englishman. He must treat the sun with respect from the time it rises till the time it sets, and even on a cloudy day the same caution is necessary. This does not mean that it is unsafe to go out in the sun. It only means that no one should step out, even for a few moments, without first putting on his sun-hat. This is a complete safeguard if it is made of real pith of sufficient thickness, and with a brim wide enough to protect the forehead and the back of the head and neck. This kind of sun-tope is very light, but in other respects it is a cumbersome and inconvenient sort of headgear, and people, especially ladies, are tempted rashly to discard it. Many ailments, and sometimes serious illnesses, quite apart from actual sunstroke, may be traced to careless exposure to the sun's rays.

CHAPTER XL

INDIAN UNREST

The umbrella in India; now universal; carried by the police. The boycott of foreign goods. Political excitement. Resentment in the Plague Refuge Camp; how it was overcome. The agency of the Church. An improved type of Hindu schoolboy; how they dress; their manners; their interest in religion. Moral teaching in schools. Conceit of some young students.

THE umbrella always has been, and is still to some extent, an important feature of life in the East. Its importance is derived more from its recognition as an emblem of dignity than from its practical utility. It was one of the prerogatives of kings and nobles to have a gorgeous umbrella borne over their head by one of their retainers. It is only the gradual levelling up of classes that has made umbrellas almost universal. Even up to quite modern times there were certain parts of Poona City where Brahmins live, in which a low-caste man would not have dared to walk with an umbrella. To do so would have been regarded as an act of insolent presumption.

But when the barrier of prohibitive custom had once been levelled, umbrellas came in with a rush,

and they are now used to an almost ludicrous extent. A mason may be seen sitting at work on a wall with his umbrella in one hand and his trowel in the other. Farm labourers out in the country, seated on the pole of their bullock-cart, or men perched on the top of loads of wood in great cities, will enjoy both the dignity and the shade of their outspread umbrella in the hot season. That it is assumed in some cases more for dignity than for actual need, is shown by the readiness with which it is discarded when convenient, and its bearer sits cheerfully bareheaded in the blazing sun.

The Bombay police are given umbrellas during the rainy season, and as the rainfall in that city is very heavy, they are a necessary though not a convenient burden for a policeman to bear. In Calcutta they go a step farther, and the umbrellas are served out during the hot season also, and the police are provided with an arrangement which looks something like braces worn outside, on to which they hang the umbrella when they find that it interferes with the discharge of their duties. Whether the Calcutta policeman really needs this protection from the sun may be doubted, when the majority of the people in the Calcutta streets are, by their own choice, entirely bareheaded. But the appearance of dignity which the umbrella conveys is no doubt an advantage to the policeman, even if he does not actually need it as a protection.

A few years back umbrellas of every imaginable

size and shape and colour and degree of disreputability were in evidence in the streets of Poona City. There was a favourite umbrella with wooden ribs, covered with a kind of oilcloth, red or yellow in colour, which was a cheap and useful article. But in these modern days of growing luxury such umbrellas are despised. "Why do you carry this kind of umbrella?" said an elegantly dressed young Hindu student to me. "I do so because it is cheap, and I am poor," was my reply. "You are not poor; you are rich," was his answer.

Umbrellas from Europe are brought into India in shoals. When an agitation arose in Bengal to boycott foreign goods the umbrella question became a complex one, because their manufacture is practically unknown in the country. The difficulty was solved by importing the component parts to be put together in India, and then they could be labelled "country-made."

Although now anybody who can afford it may carry an umbrella whenever and wherever he pleases, a certain idea of dignity still lingers in connection with it, and the bearer of this ancient symbol of importance often does so with a slight swagger, and all the more so if he is dressed in rags, or scarcely dressed at all.

The agitation in Bengal referred to above was an epidemic of political excitement amongst educated classes, and more particularly young students, which spread wider than usual, and threatened to become serious. It had therefore to be dealt with

firmly. The epidemic spread to Poona City (and indeed it was freely said that the chief wire-pullers in the movement lived there). As a result of this unrest there was a marked cooling-off in cordiality amongst the visitors to Yerandawana when plague broke out again in the city, and the annual exodus took place. The deportation to a distance of one of the leaders on the side of discontent in the city, for a period of some years, was the chief ground of local resentment. Boy friends of previous years held aloof; elder brothers, of the student class, were inclined to be cheeky; and their parents, as far as they could, kept out of the way.

In former years crowds of lads came from the Plague Refuge Camp to ask for old Christmas cards. Many of them were boys from schools of good standing where drawing is carefully taught. In order to choke off the mere idlers, we told a boy when we gave him a picture that if he wanted another one he must make a copy of the picture given, and bring back both the original and the copy the next day. The plan answers admirably, and it has become our regular custom. It gets rid of the loafers who do not want the trouble of drawing pictures, it gives the boys an occupation in their long idle days, it quickens their interest in drawing, and in a few instances has brought to light some genuine talent. Boys grow ambitious, and get chalks and colours, and produce results of artistic promise. It also brings the best type of lad almost daily to the Mission bungalow for a definite

object, and affords many opportunities for useful talks on subjects religious and secular.

But when the season recommenced after that period of political unrest, there were few applicants for pictorial cards. A sprinkling of old friends of previous years began to bring their drawings, but they did this in the face of a sarcastic opposition which few had sufficient backbone to withstand for long. But fortunately we had at that time many exceptionally attractive pictures, which people had sent us from England. The few gallant boys who braved the opposition got rewards which soon awakened longings throughout the camp to be possessors of the like. One by one, at first shyly, and then with growing confidence as deserters from the opposition grew more numerous, the old friends returned, to be followed by many new ones. The younger generation being won over, their elders began to thaw and to exchange kindly greetings, and now and then we were invited to see their hut or tent, or to sit down outside for a few minutes' talk.

It is something to be grateful for when an attitude of distrust has changed into one of friendliness. But from a religious point of view this might not have been of much use, if it had not been for the new agent which had come into the life of the village—and that agent was the village church. The effect of the building upon the Hindu mind has been already told. But in addition, many Hindus got some idea of the

nature of Christian worship by a spasmodic attendance at Evensong, especially on week-days. The nineteen double doors, most of them standing open in the hot weather when wind and dust are not too aggressive, give an opportunity for taking stock of the situation before coming inside. They are also available as roads of retreat, supposing circumstances are suggestive of danger.

When, after a rather prolonged season on account of the plague lingering longer than usual in the city, our visitors went back to their homes and we were left in comparative peace, we felt that, besides the dying down of the spirit of opposition, it had also been a useful time of education concerning Christian manners and customs, if nothing more. But without the two agencies of the pictures and the church, I do not see that we could have attained either of these results.

There are some indications that the efforts which are now being made to introduce more rational methods of teaching are beginning to influence favourably the young Indian mind. That a large number of students under the old regime have been lamentable failures nobody denies, and much of the discontent of recent years, leading in some instances to serious political crime, has been the inevitable fruit of the foreign secular education which we have brought. But there is a distinctly new type of Indian schoolboy appearing, amongst the thousands

of lads who are getting their education in Poona City. Some of them not unfrequently find their way to the village Mission-house on half-holiday afternoons, and ask to see the church, or beg for a picture post-card. They talk a little English, dropping back into the vernacular with some relief when unable to say exactly what they want in the foreign tongue. They rather incline to English dress; in some cases even substituting knicker-bockers, or trousers, for the Hindu *dhota*. The picturesque and useful turban they unfortunately give up altogether, and wear instead a small round cap. Many of them have ceased to shave their head, and are rather proud of their hair, which they wear foppishly long in front. They only nominally retain the Hindu *shinde*, or little pigtail. That is to say, the hair at the crown of the head is left slightly longer than the rest, but it is hardly noticeable. Some of them have a watch chain, but there is not always a watch at the end of it.

Their manners are generally polite and courteous, except that some of them, while retaining their caps, have begun to look upon it as a mark of servility to slip off their shoes on entering a church or house. We explain that whereas it has always been the Eastern custom to bare the feet as a courteous recognition of place or persons, the Western custom, on account of the cold climate, has been to bare the head. Hence in India, where East and West meet, it is optional

to follow whichever use the individual prefers; but to enter a church or house without baring head or feet is not polite. The lads quickly respond to the kindly explanation. Some slip off their shoes; one or two take off their caps instead, especially when they go into the church.

This they do rather shyly for the first time, and they are obviously nervous as to what going into a Christian church may involve. But confidence is established after two or three visits. Some are quite ignorant of Christ. Others just know Him by name, and that is all. More than once I have been asked for a photograph of Christ, thinking that He was somewhere accessible, or that He had lived on earth in modern times. Now and then a few lads who have heard scraps of Christianity ask questions eagerly, and are delighted to see pictures concerning Our Lord's life. Three new-comers asked me to give them some of these pictures. I said that if I did so they would perhaps turn them into ridicule. "We would never do such a thing as that," was their eager and earnest reply. And though we rarely venture to give religious pictures to Hindus, this appeared to be one of those occasions when it might be good to do so.

This type of boy goes in a good deal for cricket and football, and when playing a match knows, for the most part, how to keep his temper and to play in a sportsmanlike manner. One of their clubs they call "The New English Club." Some

attempt is made to give what is called "moral instruction" in the Hindu schools that this hopeful type of boy attends. The instruction is, of necessity, of the "honesty is the best policy" kind. That is to say, if you cultivate politeness and truthfulness, it will enable you to be a better *citizen.* Or, if you try to do what is right, you will be *respected* in the world. These are not the loftiest ideals, but anything that tends to strengthen the character and purify the life is to be welcomed. Nevertheless, the attempt to build up a scheme of morals, without Christian grace to give the spiritual power to resist the evil forces which will try to frustrate the effort, can at best only bring about a superficial improvement, liable at any time to collapse. However, these indications of an improved type of schoolboy give hope for an improved type of man, which may mean much for the future of India.

Some of the young Hindus of the city, who speak English rather fluently, become amusingly conceited in consequence. One of these lads visiting the Mission-house said to me, "Your English pronunciation is not good." I sometimes purposely reply to these English-speaking youths in Marathi, because they rather affect not to know it. This same lad said that it was no good my talking to them in that language, because that no one could understand my Marathi. When I suggested that even his English was capable of improvement, he replied that that was impossible,

because his English was "perfect." When I was showing him the church, he asked if he might go into the sanctuary, and when I said that that was reserved for the ministers, he replied that that was "superstition." Seeing some of the Mission boys, who are simply but nicely dressed, he exclaimed, "Why do you clothe your boys in this miserable way? you should give them fine and beautiful clothing." Ascertaining that I was pledged not to marry, he asked, "Why do you lead this miserable existence? There is no pleasure in life without marriage." But when the Brahmin wife of the schoolmaster happened to pass by, he was immensely astonished to hear that she was a Christian. After one or two visits young men of this sort often drop most of their conceit, and talk naturally and pleasantly.

CHAPTER XLI

THE ENGLISH IN INDIA

Bishop Heber's sentiments still apply. Misunderstandings about India. Hindu character. Action of dissenters. Rashness of the early settlers. Early rising. Cold baths. The Bishop's dress. River excursions. Conservatism in India. The Englishman's bungalow. Arrangements for bathing; their primitive nature.

It is curious to note, in letters written nearly a hundred years ago, that many of the things now said about India were said then, and hopes and fears and perplexities concerning the progress of Christianity were couched in much the same terms as at the present day.

Bishop Heber writes: "I have seen enough to find that the customs, the habits, and prejudices of the people of this country are much misunderstood in England." These words of the Bishop are still true, in spite of the multitude of books which have been written about India since his day, and the increasing number of people who visit the country.

Even the same misunderstandings linger. "We have all heard," writes the Bishop, "of the humanity of the Hindus towards brute creatures,

their horror of animal food, etc.; and you may be, perhaps, as much surprised as I was, to find that those who can afford it are hardly less carnivorous than ourselves. And though they consider it a grievous crime to kill a cow or bullock for the purpose of eating, yet they treat their draft oxen, no less than their horses, with a degree of barbarous severity which would turn an English hackney-coachman sick. Nor have their religious prejudices and the unchangeableness of their habits been less exaggerated. At present there is an obvious and increasing disposition to imitate the English in everything, which has already led to very remarkable changes, and will, probably, to still more important." The same sentiments might be written with equal truth to-day, and would be news to many.

The Bishop also describes the Hindu character with a good deal of accuracy, but he adds truly: "I do not by any means assent to the pictures of depravity and general worthlessness which some have drawn of the Hindus." But when speaking of their religion as a "demoralising and absurd religion," he is much nearer the truth than those modern writers who try to idealise it.

Speaking of dissenters, Bishop Heber writes that they are "very civil, and affect to rejoice at our success; but they, somehow or other, cannot help interfering and setting up rival schools close to ours; and they apparently find it easier to draw off our pupils, than to look out for fresh and more

distant fields of enterprise." This description would apply to the mission field in many places now, especially to the action of Roman Catholics and the Salvation Army.

The amazing rashness of the earlier settlers and missionaries comes out in some of their books and journals, and it is no wonder that the mortality amongst them was great, so that going to India was regarded as an heroic act, and the chances of return dubious. The chief precaution against the sun that they indulged in was to get up extraordinarily early, so as to get their exercise while it was still cool, and they took a long sleep in the middle of the day. Bishop Heber in one of his letters from Calcutta says: "I held my first visitation this morning at 6 o'clock (!), to avoid the heat of the day." In another letter, when on tour, he writes: "I rise by three in the morning and am on horseback by four." Again, speaking of his life in Calcutta, he says: "Our way of life is simple, and suited to the climate. The general custom is to rise at six in the cool season, and at half-past four in the morning during the hot weather, and to take exercise on horseback till the sun is hot; then follow a cold bath, prayers, and breakfast." The plunge into the "cold bath" should be noted, as being the ultimate cause of the Bishop's sudden death. Few people take a cold bath in India now, and certainly not in the early morning. Nor is the chill air in the early hours of the Indian day in the cold weather a particularly

healthy time, and nowadays the few people who come to India with the intention of conforming to the ancient custom of early morning exercise soon drop it. It is to be regretted that the tendency now is to go to the opposite extreme, and late hours at night, and comparatively late getting up, grows increasingly common. Few people, however, now look upon the midday *siesta* as a necessity.

There are authentic sketches of Bishop Heber and others out for a ride, dressed in frock coat and tall hat, as if they were in Rotten Row. The Bishop, nevertheless, seems to have accommodated his dress to the necessities of the climate more than most of the clergy, at anyrate when on tour. There is an amusing paragraph, bearing on this point, in the journal of the Archdeacon of Bombay in 1825. When Bishop Heber was drawing near to Bombay, after a long and arduous tour, he was joined by the Archdeacon, who says in the course of his notes that "there are some points, such as his wearing white trousers and a white hat, which I could wish were altered with more regard to his station, and which, perhaps strike me the more after being accustomed to the particular attention of Bishop Middleton in such points." But he goes on to say that he felt compelled to forgive him, on the score of all his other excellent qualities. In a note the editor explains that "on his journeys the Bishop wore a white solar hat, with a very broad brim (lined with green silk), made from the pith of the bamboo. As it afforded more protection

from glare and heat he preferred it to the episcopal hat, his usual dress when residing at any of the presidencies. The white trousers he adopted soon after his arrival in India, from their greater coolness; and he recommended them to his clergy on all ordinary occasions." It might be added that coolness is not the only thing to be considered for residents in India. A chill of some sort is the cause of many Indian ailments, and shirt and trousers of flannel, however thin, should be the invariable dress, by day and by night.

One of the ways of trying to regain health amongst those early workers in the East, was to go for an excursion of some weeks' duration on a river. Possibly they had in mind the beneficial results of a boat excursion on the Thames. But slow progress in a native boat, alongside the mud-banks and reedy swamps of many Indian rivers, was about as sure a way of getting, or increasing, malaria as they could have devised.

There is a strong spirit of conservatism amongst most Englishmen when they live in India. They appear to catch the traditional spirit of the country, and "what has been must always be." Hence arrangements adopted by the earlier settlers are continued to the present day, even though in some respects they are particularly inconvenient. The old-fashioned bungalow, which is always a one-storied building nearly all roof, is simplicity itself as regards plan. But it is certainly not beautiful to look at, and has nothing specially to commend

itself from a practical point of view. Yet it is only very gradually that houses more attractive in appearance, and more adapted to the ways of civilisation, are taking its place. Even in modern bungalows, the extremely primitive arrangements for bathing, which formerly had to suffice because there was nothing better, are still perpetuated. The bathroom is often a dingy, lean-to shed, opening out of your sleeping room. It has another door leading to the outer world for the use of the water-carrier, as well as for the mysterious being who glides in and out as he attends to the sanitary needs of the bathroom in a country where there is no drainage.

The actual area for bathing is something like the sink in an English scullery, but level with the floor and on an enlarged scale. The hole in the wall, as an exit for the water, is unpleasantly suggestive of a possible inlet for snakes. Nor is this fear without foundation. The hole in the wall leading into the cool, damp, dark bathroom is a distinct invitation to snakes to enter in, which they sometimes accept. The wire guard is often absent, or broken. The water for bathing is stored in utensils, varying in type according to the part of India in which you may happen to be. Sometimes it is kept in tall black earthenware pots, suggestive of those in which the Forty Thieves of the Arabian Nights concealed themselves. Sometimes it is found in a gigantic sort of round pie-dish, such as a giant

might use for his supper. Sometimes a modern galvanised iron tub indicates the fusion of Eastern and Western habits.

A servant-boy will bring you a pailful of hot water from the kitchen—that remote apartment, in some far-away corner of the compound, to which no one ventures to penetrate, unless he is prepared to eat his dinner ever afterwards with misgivings. A certain suspicion of greasiness on the surface of the water is suggestive of cooking and of vessels imperfectly cleansed. It is always rather a problem to know how one is meant to use the water in the pail, which is usually scalding hot. A visitor emptying it into the big tub of cold water, and having a luxurious tepid bath, found that in so doing he had unwittingly used up a store of cold water which was meant to last for several days. There are many parts of India where clean fresh water is scarce, and has to be fetched from a distance and used with economy.

The remaining apparatus provided for your comfort in the bathroom is a wooden board, or rack, on which you squat, while you pour water over yourself with a tin pint-pot. It is well to see that no scorpion, or other stinging insect, has hid up in any of the crevices of the board. A very refreshing bath can be secured in this primitive way, and suggestions for improved methods are scarcely welcomed by those who have got accustomed to, and now prefer, the old-fashioned plan.

CHAPTER XLII

DISHONESTY IN INDIA

Ideal low concerning work. Bribery. On the railway. Dishonest ticket clerks. Servants' commission. Door-attendant's tip. Gifts from native merchants. Changes in modern India. The Indian "growler" disappearing. Wearing shoes. Cloth coats of English cut. The daily paper. The villagers' clothing.

Most Indians have a low ideal concerning work. If six or seven are working together they take turns, and it is rare to see more than the minority in active employment at any given time. Even those who are set over them do not expect a fuller response. It is also rare to find anyone (except a few first-class artizans) who takes pride in his work, or who can be trusted to do it well except under supervision. Even in a household it is rare to find a servant (except a few very capable head-servants) who can be depended on to maintain a satisfactory standard of work, unless he is frequently reminded whenever he slackens off. In teaching lads a trade, the majority of them need to be shown over and over again how to do a thing before they grasp it. And even after skill has been acquired, it

is not until they have felt the inconvenience of being called upon to re-do what has been done badly, that they realise that it is best to do it well at first.

Hardly any transaction, great or small, is completed in heathen India without something of the nature of a bribe taking place, and the system is so almost universal that it seems as if it is likely to be a long time before it is eradicated. Hardly anyone will do anything for anybody without the stimulus of a reward of some sort. Many Indian officials will not discharge even the ordinary duties of their office without frequent "refreshers" from the people amongst whom they work. It is naturally the poorest and weakest who suffer most from this form of oppression.

On the railway there is almost unlimited scope for this. The doors on to the platform of the waiting-rooms, or rather sheds, which are provided for native passengers are generally only opened just as the train comes in. The rush is often great, and the number of passengers is constantly in excess of the vacant places in the train. The official who unlocks the door leading on to the platform can easily favour certain persons, and keep back others, with very little risk of detection, and it is the traveller who has been most ready with his "palm oil" who gets through the gate promptly, and so stands a good chance of getting a seat in the train.

In selling tickets to third-class passengers there is vast scope for cheating. They are mostly illiterate, and many of them inexperienced in the ways of travel. A dishonest clerk can easily discriminate the kind of passenger he is dealing with, and when he thinks it safe to do so, can quote the price of the ticket as being something over and above its real value, and then pocket the balance. The price printed on the tickets is no guide to the majority of third-class Indian travellers. In the course of a long day a dishonest ticket clerk, by means of small irregularities, can add substantially to his income. Detectives, disguised as poor passengers, are sometimes successful in bringing a clerk of this character to book. The goods and parcels traffic also furnishes a wide field for overcharge, and also of vexatious delay when the stimulus of a commission on the transaction is lacking.

If a servant is sent to fetch a *tonga* from the bazaar, more often than not he will make the driver give him a *pice* or two, under the threat of otherwise not giving him any more of his master's custom. One of the many servants of the average Indian bungalow sits at the entrance of the front verandah, and he is the channel of communication between the outside world and the powers within. Door-bells, for some inscrutable reason, are practically unknown in the Englishman's bungalow. If the door-attendant happens to be absent, the visitor shouts "Boy," a word which in Western

India is applied, not very happily, to any household servant of whatever age.

If the caller is a *sahib*, the door-attendant will quickly attend to his wants and will bring him into rapid communication with his master. But supposing you are a poor native, wanting to see the sahib on some matter of business, unless you are lucky enough to waylay him as he drives in or out, which he may possibly resent, you stand a poor chance of getting near him unless you are prepared to tip the door-keeper. It is to be feared that even Hindus, coming in an honest spirit of inquiry to a missionary's house, have been choked off by an official of this nature. It is of the utmost importance that the front verandah of a mission-house should be freely accessible to whoever likes to step into it.

District officers when they are on tour and living in camp, and who are honestly anxious to be within reach of everybody who has a real grievance, have sometimes great difficulty in preventing their good intentions being frustrated by some of the subordinate officials who form an inevitable part of their retinue.

Native merchants who deal with Englishmen have the idea so ingrained that bribes are a necessary part of business, that they imagine that the way to secure custom, or at anyrate more favourable terms, is to make large offerings of fruit and sweetmeats at Christmas, and such-like auspicious times. One of the results of this is that

most things in the Indian markets, and even in some of the shops, grow rather dearer just before Christmas, and the notion is spreading amongst Hindus and others that it is a season for presents and feasting. Some of these traders may even proceed to hint vaguely about financial percentages, if they think that acceptance is at all likely. It is to be hoped that the tradition that Englishmen in positions of trust are proof against such suggestions, is one that may always be maintained.

Amongst the signs which indicate that India, for better or worse, is beginning to move with the times, may be noted an increase in refinement, a greater regard for outward appearance, and the gradual introduction of things which conduce to greater comfort. The two-horse conveyance, called a *shiggram*, which used to represent the "growler" of Poona City, has almost disappeared. It was certainly a most comfortless kind of carriage, something like what a growler would be if you removed all its lining and padding, and with very narrow seats. In its place victorias and landaus have become almost universal, and those belonging to private owners are often well built and nicely kept. The number of people wearing shoes of English pattern rapidly increases, together with the use of socks. The Hindu Widows' Home has established quite a thriving business in the manufacture of socks and stockings for men. Indians have been accustomed to go barefoot, not because they prefer it, but partly because to wear shoes

was, like the umbrella, a mark of distinction not to be assumed by everybody, and partly because poverty forbade it. But there are times in the year when an Indian suffers a good deal through going barefoot. In the middle of the day in the hot weather the surface of a high-road is so heated that an Englishman could not tread upon it at all with bare feet, and even the hardened sole of the Indian is put to serious inconvenience. Indians say that in the wet weather, when the roads are often deep in soft mud, this mud gets in between the toes and is extremely uncomfortable. And in the cold weather, the boys' bare feet get deeply cut by the chill air of the early mornings which has descended from frosty regions.

Masters in the better-class schools and the majority of students, the numerous lawyers, and some shopkeepers, have taken to wearing cloth coats, which are now almost universally of English cut, although the native coat was very effective and convenient. Shops are arranged with some regard to artistic effect, and many of the shops in Poona City are now bright and attractive in appearance and contain a varied stock. Formerly the shop was little more than the place where the goods were stored, and there was little attempt to attract the passer-by, and only a languid effort to attend to his wants if he stopped to express them.

The daily paper has become a regular part of the day's routine of the much-leisured Hindu, and the demand has greatly improved the character

of the supply, and some of the vernacular papers furnish up-to-date news, and the leaders are written with ability. The more stringent measures which it became necessary to put in force because of the seditious character of many of the vernacular papers has done much to purify the Indian press, so that while many of the papers retain an independent line, their criticisms are couched in sufficiently decorous language.

Even amongst the working classes there is a great advance in comfort, especially as regards clothing. The scanty dress of the Indian arose, not so much because of the hot climate, but because he could only afford a few yards of calico. Now he is not only much less unclothed than he used to be, but his garments are of better material and more skilfully made. The Indian villager also often wears cloth coats of English shape, but he has not made much advance as regards cleanliness. He does not wash all over much oftener than his English rural brother, except in the hot weather if there is a river within reach. He rarely washes his clothes, but wears them till they are so dirty that he can wear them no longer, and then buys new ones; and he appears to think that this is the best arrangement.

CHAPTER XLIII

INDIAN MOHAMMEDANS

Mohammedans and marriage. Their conception of heaven. Their trading on board ships. The smell of India. The Indian "send-off." Use of the plural. Mistakes concerning it. Unappreciated English jocosity. Indian free-and-easiness.

A MOHAMMEDAN asked me whether if he became a Christian we would provide him with a wife, and he appeared surprised to learn that as a Christian he could only have one wife. "Our religion allows four," he said. When I urged that more than one wife destroyed the idea of the unity of husband and wife, he replied, "We consider one of our wives as being our real wife, and the others are like servants." I said that the additional marriages, under such conditions, could only be contracted for the gratification of fleshly desires. His answer was, "If a man can afford it, why should he not give himself pleasure?" After this there was nothing more to be said.

Mohammedans succeed better than Hindus as men of business, and there are many Mohammedan firms who do a large trade. In the harbour at Colombo and at other ports, Mohammedan

jewel-merchants come on board the steamers in order to try and sell their wares to the passengers. In the interval between the departure of one batch of passengers and the arrival of another, some of these merchants, having nothing to do, came over to where I was standing on the deck of a steamer, to talk about religion. They all spoke English in that pleasant way in which many Easterns speak it—rather hazy about the verbs, but clear in their pronunciation, so that it is easy to understand them. An Indian who knows perhaps only a few English words, generally pronounces them correctly.

"Good morning, father, I am very glad to see you," is how the conversation began.

"Are you a Catholic?" I asked.

"I know all about the Catholic," was the reply, "I was taught in Catholic school; I know all Catholic teaching."

"But you are not a Catholic yourself."

"No, I am a Mohammedan; but I like Catholic."

Some of the others then chimed in and began to urge their usual objections concerning the Virgin birth, and the Holy Trinity. I was interested in hearing what they had to say, because we do not often meet Mohammedans in the Poona district. I thought that possibly the assertion that their conception of heaven is so degraded might have been exaggerated, so that I was glad of an opportunity to learn from the lips of intelligent

representatives of their religion what their views really are. They affirmed that everything that there is on earth will be in heaven, including all that concerns marriage. In order to get at the bottom of the matter, I asked whether, as the result of this, children would be born in heaven. They replied that nothing had been revealed concerning that, but that probably children would not be born. They were, therefore, only anticipating sensual gratification.

I told them the story of the seven brethren with the one wife, and that Christ, whom they accepted as a true Prophet, said that they neither marry nor are given in marriage in heaven. They answered that, in spite of that, it was quite certain that there would be marriage in heaven. It is hardly to be wondered at if, amongst nations specially prone to sensuality, a religion spreads which allows four wives in the present, and holds out such prospects for the future.

Yet there is something winning and attractive about many of these men with their gentle courteous manners. Passengers coming on board, there was prospect of business, so saying that they hoped that nothing that they had said would have caused me any offence, they shook hands and hurried off, and were soon deeply absorbed in the industry of trying to see how much they could persuade the globe-trotter to give for their wares. But their trade is not so good as it was some years back. The traveller is more wide-awake, and

his inclination now is to err on the side of paying too little. Some shipping lines have also forbidden traders to board the ships, because it gave an opportunity for thieves to get on board under the guise of traders, and a good many things had been stolen from passengers in this way.

Landing in Bombay from the same ship, an Australian lady said to me, as the passengers were waiting on the Bunder while the luggage was passing through the Customs, "What is this strange smell?" "It is only the smell of India," I replied. "Then I don't like it," she said very decidedly. There is in India a peculiar stale smell which you seldom get entirely away from, unless on some lofty hills far removed from the haunts of men. It is the smell of an undrained country, where the habits of the people transgress the most elementary sanitary rules, so that even out in country districts, if there are human habitations in the neighbourhood, the air is tainted.

Whereas it is the English custom to receive a new-comer into office with great ceremony, the Indian reserves his enthusiasm for the time of departure. The new viceroy is welcomed with much state ceremonial, but he departs in comparatively homely fashion. If the arrangements were in the hands of Indians, it is the outgoing viceroy who would receive the chief honours. After all, this may be the right way. The new-comer has not yet been tried, whereas if he has done his duty during his time of office, it is at

the point of his departure that display of gratitude is becoming. If the head of a mission has to go to England on furlough, the residents at the mission-station will probably give him a tremendous send-off, even if he is not particularly popular. But when he returns, the Indians who saw him off so enthusiastically will receive him back with gracious smiles and kindly greeting, and half a dozen special friends may call and garland him, but there will be no general demonstration, unless there are some English people on the spot to suggest it as being the proper thing to do.

Mistakes made in the effort to speak a difficult Eastern language are inevitable. But the new-comer is not aware of certain subtle dangers which exist, quite apart from mispronunciation, or wrong tenses and genders, or words misapplied. To use the singular number instead of the plural in speaking to an Indian, except of the lowest rank, is considered by him as an act of great rudeness. In speaking to children the singular number is always used, and very intimate friends use it in speaking to each other. High-caste Hindus use it in speaking to low-caste people, in order to emphasise their own superior position. Missionaries generally begin to exercise their conversational powers in the vernacular by trying to say a few words to the boys of the mission. And as their efforts are generally welcomed by the boys in a kindly and encouraging spirit, the missionary waxes bold and begins to converse with the elder members

of his flock, or even with dignified outsiders, with sometimes unfortunate results, because he uses unblushingly, but unknowingly, the singular number which he grew familiar with in his conversations with the boys.

"Where art thou going?" I said to one of the senior members of the congregation—proud to be able to address him in Marathi. "You speak like a Brahmin," was his reply. At the time I took this to be fulsome praise of my pronunciation, and it was not till long afterwards, as I recalled his words, that I understood that he meant that I was addressing him in the contemptuous way in which Brahmins speak to their inferiors. A lady worker, after struggling bravely with the intricacies of Marathi, said that at last she felt encouraged when, after conversing with some Indian women, she heard one of them say, "She speaks like a Hindu." Fortunately, or unfortunately, she did not understand the real meaning of the remark.

Indians do not readily understand or appreciate the half-jocose way in which Englishmen are wont to show friendliness to others. I saw at a railway station some rather venerable Christians from a village mission seeing off a young missionary. The new-comer was trying to be "hail-fellow-well-met" with these members of his congregation, smacking them on the back and laughing a good deal, and calling them "old chaps." The latter expression they did not understand, but they looked

grave and puzzled; and probably the newly arrived missionary learnt, after a little longer experience, that all English manners and customs are not applicable to India.

The reverse is also true. There is an Indian kind of free-and-easy manner which is meant to indicate a spirit of friendliness, which is just as little understood by the Englishman, and which he not unfrequently imagines to be intentional rudeness, and resents accordingly.

CHAPTER XLIV

NIGHT ALARMS IN INDIA

Mortality caused by snake-bite. Snakes in the bungalow. The cobra; how it shows fight. An exciting contest. The night-watchman; his jingling-stick; his slumber. Village night-scare. Supposed dacoits. The village *chowdi:* lads sleeping in it.

It must be confessed that snakes are one of the drawbacks of country life in India, especially after dark. That they are not an imaginary source of danger is shown by the tremendous total in the annual returns of those killed by snakes in British India. Every year this amounts to about 20,000 people. The returns for the last ten years show that, in spite of the attempt to wage war against snakes, the toll of casualties does not diminish. The number of snakes killed in a recent year, for which Government gave rewards, amounted to 63,719. But in so vast a country the destruction even of so many would make little appreciable difference.

Although the cobra is an object of worship, Indians do not become reconciled to snakes. The cry of *sarp*—"snake"—makes almost as great excitement as the cry of "fire." You never can

be sure where you may not find a snake. Once when I was coming home in the dark, there was just light enough to enable me to see a snake travelling up the steps of the verandah into the bungalow, and I was in time to kill it before it hid up. The most uncomfortable situation is when you see a snake go into the house and you cannot find out where he has located himself. A *krait*, the most deadly snake in India, in the middle of the day came in at the door of the room in which I was sitting reading. It seemed surprised to see me, and retired behind the door, where I quickly slew him. It was remarkable to see the horror of a cat, who came in just afterwards and saw the dead body of the snake, and for a week or two afterwards she would not pass through that room. As we entered the refectory one evening for dinner we saw a large snake vanish out of the back door, and we found it curled up behind the water-butt.

It is impossible to get reliable local information as to which of the snakes are poisonous or not. If you ask an Indian about the character of any snake he always answers, "Very bad." But it is the cobra which is really an unpleasant creature to have any dealings with. Most other snakes will try and slink into a corner, or hide up. But the cobra, if cornered, shows fight and becomes formidable. He raises himself up a foot or two, puffs out his mantle, sways his head about as if he was taking aim, and strikes with great force to some distance, according to his size. I do not know if

there are any instances recorded of recovery from the bite of a cobra, but if so, they are exceedingly rare.

Early one morning we found a cobra in a sleepy state, just ouside one of the church doors. By his swollen condition it was evident that he was digesting his last meal. It was easy to despatch him with a long bamboo, which we keep for cobras. But at the first blow he had still energy just to raise his head into the fighting attitude, when he looks most forbidding. We found inside him a frog, dead but otherwise in good preservation, which accounted for his distended and sleepy state. One day, just after Evensong, when the people were coming out of church, one of the boys heard a hiss, and saw a cobra in the angle of a buttress. The long bamboo was again equal to the occasion.

The village schoolmaster, returning in the dark with his family after a day's holiday, heard a hiss as he opened his house door, and he saw a snake glide down the verandah. But it was too dark to see whether it went away, or whether it went into one of the other rooms. The process of investigation was rather an embarrassing one. The door of the next room was so situated that a view of the interior could not be got without going inside, and the snake might have hidden behind the door. After making loud demonstrations in the doorway with the bamboo, I ventured in cautiously, and by the light of a lantern which the master held, we saw at the further end of the room under a cot a large

cobra, with its head raised and slowly waving about, according to its uncanny custom. As it was probable that it would make for the door if attacked, because there was no other exit, I at once pinned it against the wall with the long bamboo. A fierce contest raged for a few moments. The cobra flung itself hither and thither, and getting free, endeavoured to come down the room towards the door. Some sage advisers say, "Hit a snake on the tail and he will die." But when it is twisting about with marvellous rapidity and tying itself into fantastic knots, there is no time to consider where to hit it. No time is to be lost, and you must hit it wherever you can. I did so with the cobra, who presently began to show signs of collapse, and I was able to batter its head and the danger was over. We were grateful that the adventure ended so favourably. We hung up the corpse on a thorn hedge near by, as a warning to his tribe. But a snake is a dainty morsel to many creatures, and by the morning it was gone.

Indians walking noiselessly with bare feet run a special risk, especially at night when snakes are on the move. But in spite of the number in the Yerandawana neighbourhood, I have never known a case of snake-bite. They invariably try to get out of the way when they hear anybody coming. The night-watchmen, who form part of the complicated establishment of most bungalows in India as a supposed safeguard against thieves, often have bits of jingling iron fastened on to the end of the

stick which they always carry. The typical night-watchman at anyrate once in the course of the night makes his noisy round of the compound, striking his stick on the ground, partly in order to frighten away snakes by the rattling of the iron, and partly to assure his employer of his alertness. It takes a little time before you learn to accept this as only one amongst the many other noises of the Indian night, and not to be taken any notice of. If you feel any compunction at resting comfortably in bed while the watchman is abroad, you will be relieved if you chance to come out at any other hour except that at which he is accustomed to take his little round. You are almost sure to find him sleeping peacefully and soundly in the verandah. Possibly in former days, when night alarms were more frequent and thieves more aggressive than they are now, the watchman was more on the alert.

One night some of the villagers came to ask me to come down into the village and help them in a difficulty. It appeared that for the last three or four nights they had been alarmed by stones being slung into the place from a distance. They fell with considerable force, and if they had struck anyone he would have been seriously injured. As I drew near one or two stones fell on the roofs of some of the houses, making a great clatter. Some people said that four men had been seen hanging about, wearing trousers and boots and big turbans; but many tales were afloat, and none of them very

authentic. The theory was that these men were dacoits attempting to terrorise the place, preparatory to attack and plunder. Though this kind of brigandage still survives, it is no longer common, especially in the neighbourhood of Poona, with its large police force. My own impression was that some larky young fellows from the next village, which was noted for its rowdiness, were trying to create a scare for the sake of a joke.

We paraded the outskirts of the place, accompanied by some of the more valiant spirits, who were armed with long bamboos. They loudly challenged everybody that they met, and were relieved when the answer was equivalent to "a friend." Finally we all assembled in the centre of the village in what, in an English town, would have been the market-place, opposite to the town-hall. In our case the square was very small, hemmed in by houses, according to the crowded arrangement peculiar to most Indian villages. The town-hall was a low shed, in which, in spite of its homely appearance, all the public ceremonies, great or small, take place. It is also the custom in villages, amongst the Hindu population, for the young unmarried men and boys to sleep in this central *chowdi*, as it is called, which is often fairly spacious. The dwelling-houses are thus left free for their parents and sisters. General morality is enforced by the village elders, except as regards conversation, and concerning that there is unbridled license. The little market-place was crowded with

those brave ones who had perambulated with us, and the timid ones who had remained inside. In fact, all the men and big boys of the village were there. Everyone had a weapon of some sort. A council of war was held. I suggested that such an assembly of stalwart fellows was a match for any number of thieves. But they said that men of the dacoit class were armed with long knives, with which they would slash your legs as soon as look at you. I replied that with their long bamboos, rightly used, they need not fear knives. Someone said that a gun was what was wanted, and asked if I had not got one. I answered that a priest was a man of peace, and had no need of guns. Another said, would I write and ask for police protection? I reminded them of the resentment they had shown on a previous occasion when they thought I had been responsible for bringing police into the place.

At this juncture the clattering of more stones upon some of the adjoining roofs sent the few women, who had crept out to listen to our talk, shrieking into their houses, while I and a rather increased band of braves again explored in the direction from which the stones had come. We met two or three young fellows belonging to the large colony of medicine-men who live in Yerandawana, but who do not mix much with the other villagers. They are a roving, easygoing race, fond of hunting and drinking, and with a largely developed element of mischief and fun. I felt

a strong suspicion that these young men, who I thought seemed a little embarrassed at meeting me, could throw light on the mystery. Anyhow the stir of that night had the effect of frightening whoever were the authors of the scare, and there was no repetition of the annoyance.

The Patel, who as head man of the village ought to have been to the front in a time of difficulty, was so alarmed at the situation that he made tracks for Poona, and did not return until he was assured that peace had been restored.

CHAPTER XLV

THE INDIAN WASHERMAN

The *dhobi*, or washerman. The Christian *dhobi*. Laundry-work for mission boys; failure of the enterprise. How the *dhobi* does his work; beating the clothes on a stone. Relaxations of the *dhobi;* his difficulties in the rains; his standard of honesty; he learns his trade in childhood; his bullock. Bells on cattle, useful at night; melody of the bells. An obstinate bullock a perplexity. Motor-cars and bullocks.

INDIA is a country in which the washing of clothes is carried out to perfection, so far as the cleansing and bleaching of the garments is concerned. But it must be confessed that this desirable result is attained at much cost to the garments themselves. The profession of washerman, or *dhobi* as he is called, like most other occupations in India, is chiefly an hereditary one. It is very difficult for anyone outside the *dhobi* caste to get a footing in the profession. Washing is done in the open air in a stream or river, or on the edge of a tank, or *howd.* These washing-places are so jealously guarded by the *dhobis* that an intruder on their sacred preserves has no chance. At one time it was hoped that *dhobi* work might prove a useful

occupation for those boys of the Mission who do not shape into carpenters. All the Mission washing would provide a good means of livelihood for several lads. And in India it is men who run the laundry. Their womenkind help, but in almost every case it is the man who is the responsible person.

There was at one time a Christian *dhobi* in the Mission. He was a convert from Hinduism, and some people were uncharitable enough to suggest that the secret of his conversion was to be found in his hope that it would secure to him the Mission washing in perpetuity. But, however this may have been, he managed to retain his rights as a *dhobi* after his baptism, and took his station at the usual washing-place without difficulty. Increasing age and his need of assistance first suggested the idea that he might teach his craft to some of the Mission boys. The attempt was beset with many difficulties. The members of the *dhobi* caste had tolerated the old convert, but when they found that he was taking Christian boys as his pupils they were up in arms, and put every possible difficulty in their way. A Hindu *dhobi*, who was already doing some of the Mission washing, professed to be independent of the prejudices of his fellows, and volunteered to protect the boys, and to instruct them in the mysteries of his trade. He persevered gallantly for a while, but the resentment of his fellows was eventually too much for him. They even put him out of caste,

and that is a punishment which no Hindu can endure.

So, rather apologetically, because he had been bold in his protestations of his disregard of public opinion, he told us that he would not be able to continue to instruct our boys. They tried to carry on the work on their own account, and though exposed to a good deal of petty persecution from the Hindu *dhobis*, they managed to assert their right to wash clothes in the stream. But they had not been under instruction long enough to really learn the art, and without any competent person to take the lead, their efforts soon became so unsatisfactory that the industry had to be unwillingly abandoned.

The Indian *dhobi* always, by preference, washes clothes in a stream of running water where such is to be had. Some municipalities, where there is an adequate water-supply at their disposal, have made artificial arrangements of this nature, with water running from taps into small tanks where the *dhobis* stand and wash. But they much prefer the river. Many of the Indian rivers for a large part of the year provide just the conditions which the *dhobi* loves. The water is generally reduced to a modest stream, running amongst rocks and stones, with deep pools here and there, and long stretches of dry sand or gravel, or even green grass, on which the clothes can be spread to bleach. The *dhobi* stands in the stream and rinses the linen in the running water, sometimes using a little soap. But

his real agent for cleansing consists of large smooth stones belonging to the river-bed, which lie handy or which he has fished out, and on these he dashes the wet garments.

As I write [at Khandala] I hear the *dhobi* in the stream just below, busy with repeated flagellations which resound loudly. As I saw him take up a pair of pyjamas I watched the whole process carefully. He rinsed them for a short time in the stream. He then kneaded them slightly on the stone and rinsed them again. Then doubling the garments into a long roll which he held by one end, he raised it high above his head and dashed it with all his strength on the stone about eighteen times. When the water had been beaten out he again dipped the roll into the stream and resumed his flagellations. He repeated this process six times, so that by the time he had finished and the pyjamas were added to the pile of washed clothes, they had been beaten on the stone more than a hundred times. The process effectually expels all the dirt, but the amount of literal wear and tear to which the garment is exposed can easily be imagined. Mother-of-pearl shirt-buttons fare badly under this treatment, and for this reason are not much used in India.

The scorching sun is another purifying element. Under its bleaching influence the well-washed garments become white as snow, and have that refreshing fragrance of complete cleanliness which an Indian resident misses when at home and

he has to receive his washing from an English laundry.

The ordinary Indian *dhobis* only iron the clothes by smoothing them over with their hands, but the more accomplished artists use large and heavy box-irons, which are heated by filling the box with hot ashes. The *dhobis* who are experienced in getting up linen for English residents do so with great skill, and accomplish successfully the most elaborate tasks. Washing is very cheap, like most things in India which depend on labour. The usual custom is to pay so much a month, for which sum you may send to the wash as many articles as you like. In Poona City Rs.2 is the usual monthly payment—that is to say, 2s. 8d. in English money,—but Indians who employ a *dhobi* pay much less.

It will be seen that laundry work done in Indian fashion is very laborious; but the *dhobis* are a cheerful race, and many of them make a good deal of money. Their chief relaxation seems to be an occasional social evening, which extends till the next morning. Liquor flows freely on these occasions, and as the evening progresses the uproar increases, and before the party finally breaks up a war of many words generally ends in some, or all of the guests, having a free fight, which, however, is generally without bloodshed and does not apparently hinder the resumption of friendly relationships the next day.

The *dhobi's* time of trial is the rainy season,

when he pursues his trade under great difficulties. The modest stream of clear water, so well suited to his purpose, has developed into a rolling river of muddy water. His smooth stones, his gravelly shoals, the banks of green grass, are now buried deep in a foaming torrent. The air is laden with moisture, and violent rain falls repeatedly. He lives in a miserable hut, with none of the appliances which we are accustomed to see in laundries. His artificial means for drying clothes are of the most primitive character, and his customers are clamouring for their garments, and abusing him because he is behindhand.

In a country where integrity in matters of trade is rare, it is not to be expected that the *dhobi's* standard of honesty will be higher than that of other people, and the nature of his employment gives facilities for petty dishonesty: such as exchanging old handkerchiefs for new, or not bringing back the same number of garments as he took away. But even when his intentions are good, it makes it the more difficult to return the washing correctly that the English markings on the clothes are to him only so many cabalistic signs, merely to be recognised by their general appearance. And as the *dhobi* often finds himself misled in his attempt to follow this uncertain guide, he adopts signs of his own for his regular customers, and with coloured thread, or even ink, makes marks on the clothes intelligible to

himself, and not always conducive to the appearance of the garment.

From a merely utilitarian point of view there are some advantages in the fact that certain trades are practically confined to the members of certain castes. A *dhobi*, for instance, does not expect or aspire to be anything different. Hence he begins to learn his craft almost from infancy. Again, as I write, I can see in the stream below a busy family of three generations of *dhobis*. The grandfather is grey-haired, and though taking a good share of the work is obviously getting into old age, although probably not much over fifty. But for most Indians that means old age. His son is a hale man in the prime of life. Two or three women, the wives of one or other, or of each, are assisting. But there is a little grandson about three or four years old. He still walks rather unsteadily on bowed legs. He is already absorbed in learning the mysteries of his ancestral trade. He is given a pair of stockings to wash, and, small as he is, he copies exactly the actions of his parents. He rinses the stocking in the water, beats it on the stone so far as his limited supply of strength will allow, rinses it again, beats it again, and finally casts it on one side when the process is complete, as he sees his father do. He is almost a full-fledged *dhobi* as soon as he has learned to talk and walk. Not being very great at the latter accomplishment, he rides home on the bullock,

which is a necessary part of the stock and trade of every prosperous *dhobi*. The bullock carries the clothes, which are formed into a sort of huge bolster, which, when put on the back of the bullock, nearly touches the ground on either side.

Bullocks almost invariably have a bell hung round their necks. When cattle are out grazing the bell is useful, because it serves to indicate their whereabouts when they have strayed. They also follow more or less the sound of one anothers' bells, so that they tend to keep a flock or herd together. The bells on the bullocks which are employed in road traffic have a practical use, because, when travelling by night, the proximity of a bullock-cart is often first indicated in the dark by the tinkling of the bells. These are often two or three inches in diameter, and in the comparative stillness of night can be heard at some distance. When a string of a dozen or more bullock-carts follow each other in close succession the jingling of the bells rings out cheerfully. In fact, an additional reason why people like to have bells on their bullocks is that the Hindu is mostly timid at night, and the sound of the bells is a kind of companionship, and may do something towards warning off evil spirits.

When a number of bells are tinkling at the same time they are naturally not always in tune with one another, and discordant combinations may result, especially when the bells of two bullocks

yoked together are much out of tune. But if you listen critically to each bell, when a row of carts is passing, you will every now and then hear one of a peculiarly rich and mellow sound. I once tried to persuade a man to sell a melodious bell which I heard by chance as he drove by, but he would not entertain the idea for a moment. Perhaps he thought that it would be unlucky to part with it.

That the bullocks themselves get to look upon the bell as a necessary accompaniment to work, has been often noticed. An Englishman travelling by night in a bullock-cart found that the ceaseless jingling of the bells kept him awake, and he ordered them to be removed. But when the sound ceased the beasts took it as an indication that work was over, and promptly lay down, and no further progress was made till the bells had been restored. An Indian bullock is for the most part a docile and long-suffering creature. But he makes up for his usual good behaviour when he happens to get annoyed. He is not unlike his Indian master in this respect. If a bullock lies down and refuses to do his work, no amount of persuasion will induce him to change his mind. Natives even go so far as to light straw under him when all other efforts to make him budge fail. More often, when blows and energetic tail-twistings have no effect on him, the beast has to be humoured in some way. His mind is often restored to its normal equilibrium by inducing him to change

places with his yoke-fellow, or with a bullock in another cart.

The eventualities of road traffic do not usually disturb the placidity of the bullock, but if he once gets frightened and loses his head, he gives way to unmitigated panic. The first appearance of the motor-car, which is now almost as common in parts of India as it is in England, reduced many bullocks to a state of abject terror. Fortunately most mishaps with bullock-carts are not very serious in their results. The cart is not easily broken, and is quickly righted. But having occasion to travel in a public motor-car through a country district where the car was then a novelty, it was alarming to see the state of chaos which we were constantly leaving in our rear. The theory of the driver of the car was that, if bullocks are frightened, the best course is to dash past quickly and get it over. The result was not altogether a success. The fact that a horrible monster had sped by was sufficient to produce panic, and the first impulse of the bullock was to rush off the road to some place of safety. In India it is easy to go off the track at any point, because there is often neither wall nor hedge, and the surrounding country may be uneven and intersected with beds of streams and deep hollows.

In the course of our journey I saw a bullock-cart swerve off the road and fall bottom upwards into a field on a much lower level. Anyone unfamiliar with bullock-cart accidents would expect

much more disastrous results from such a mishap than was probably actually the case; but I saw the tragedy when we were already far ahead, and our driver of course never saw it at all. Consternation was excited in the traffic ahead of us by the hoot of the car. Drivers, who had already experienced the effect of a motor-car on their beasts, leapt from their cart, and hastily urging the bullocks to the side of the road, stood in front of them and blindfolded their eyes with their garments so that they might not see the apparition tearing by. After a little familiarity with motors, the philosophic Indian bullock soon gets to regard them with supreme indifference.

CHAPTER XLVI

AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

Agricultural colleges. Indian soil exhausted; need of chemical manures. Signs of progress among farmers. The city sweepings. Sugar cane; hospitalities connected with it; we are invited; our reception; the juice from the cane; its produce in other forms. Potatoes. The Indian evening; its rapid approach. Return of the cattle.

THE Government of India are spending large sums on agricultural research. They have a College of Agriculture on an extensive scale at Pusa, in Bengal, and another big college near Poona has just been completed. These handsome buildings, with their chemical laboratories, lecture rooms, and English professors, seem at the first glance strangely remote from the homely farmer in his native village, and the first inclination is to suggest that these colleges will only produce a crop of ornamental figure-heads, who will graduate in agriculture, but who will make no practical use of the knowledge which they have acquired.

But the aim of these colleges is not quite so visionary as one might think. The Government realises that it will be long before the influence of

the college reaches the small farmer in his village. The real point is that the soil of India is worn out through continued cropping without manuring, and it now only yields a small percentage of what it might produce, if properly treated. Farmyard manure, such as the English farmer so largely depends upon for the enrichment of his land, does not exist in India. This is partly because the cattle are roaming about all day, and as a rule are only gathered into sheds at night; partly because the coarse stalks of the native kinds of grain are not suitable for stable litter like English straw; but chiefly because the droppings from the cattle are made up into flat cakes and dried in the sun, which are then used as fuel in conjunction with a certain amount of wood. This custom is so rooted that it would be hopeless to try and modify it. Nor indeed is there any other fuel available. It is long before coal will find its way into common use for cooking purposes.

The moral of this is, that the only solution of the problem is to be found in the introduction of chemical manure. But this can only be done effectually after prolonged experiments. In a country so vast and so varied as India the varieties of soil are great, and the climatic conditions manifold. All sorts of different crops are grown. Hence the experiments necessary to find out how this variety is to be successfully treated must be spread over a long period of time, and results can only be arrived at gradually. Even in the process

of irrigation, which at one time appeared to be such a simple matter, because where an ample supply of water could be secured the genial sun seemed to do all the rest, the lapse of years is revealing the fact that repeated irrigation produces certain deleterious chemical changes in the soil, which might ultimately become disastrous to the production of the crop. Hence experiments have to be made to determine to what extent irrigation must be restricted, and how the adverse chemical conditions can be counteracted.

When facts have been ascertained, their dissemination and acceptance is another problem. To accomplish this a good deal of the pioneer work, as with most progressive steps in India, must be done by Englishmen. Indians, however well instructed, would not be listened to in the first instance with confidence by their fellow-countrymen. They would suspect that self-interest was at the back of their advice, and the chemical manure which they recommended would, on that account, be distrusted. Hence, at present, a good many of the lecturers, and even some of the inspectors who are to travel in the districts to advise and assist the farmers in agricultural matters, have to be Englishmen. But it is hoped that their places will gradually be taken by those Indians whom they are now instructing.

Although farmers all the world over are conservative and opposed to novelties, they generally end by adopting improvements when they have

realised that they are remunerative. Yerandawana village being close to Poona City, the farmers can procure for their land the street sweepings, which are sold by the municipality at so much a load. The farmers see the difference between land which has been manured and that which has not. They spend, what is to them, large sums of money on this litter, and they do so readily because they find that they are abundantly repaid by the increase in their crops. Street sweepings and city litter can, of course, only be procured in the immediate vicinity of large towns, and it is limited in quantity, so that this kind of manure does not go far in enriching the impoverished Indian soil. If farmers are able to see that chemical manure produces the same result as the litter, it is reasonable to suppose that in process of time they would be equally ready to buy the new agent.

Sugar cane is undoubtedly the most beautiful in appearance of all Indian crops; and when the cane is being converted into raw sugar, this is one of the most animated rural sights. The process takes place in the open air in a corner of the field itself, or else close by. Although it involves plenty of work and all is stir and bustle, it is a time which the workers enjoy. They encamp on the spot, and it is a sort of prolonged picnic.[1]

It is a pleasant custom amongst the sugar-cane growers to invite little parties of friends to come

[1] The process has been fully described in *Indian Jottings*, p. 253.

to the plantation to drink the fresh juice, and other uninvited guests are apt to stroll round in the hope of getting something. The code of hospitality amongst Indians being such a liberal one, even the palpable cadgers are not sent away empty. Apparently every visitor to any garden must be made to take away some tangible memento of his visit, if it be only a single flower.

One of the leading farmers in Yerandawana was, from the first, very adverse to the intrusion of the Mission into the village. He did not openly oppose, but when at intervals the villagers got suspicious and cooled off in their friendly advances, it was known that it was largely due to the influence of this Hindu. But time gradually does its beneficent work of pacification, and there came indications of friendly advances on the part of Bulwantrao himself. Finally his eldest son called one afternoon and asked two of us to go that evening to his sugar-cane plantation, so that he might entertain us, and he said that eight of the Mission boys might come with us.

We gladly accepted the invitation, and went to the appointed place at sunset. The pleasant scent as we drew near was reminiscent of jam-making in old days at home, and the process was somewhat similar. Bulwantrao's son, Rama, a coarse-featured lad with a raucous voice, welcomed us heartily. The Indian father usually drops into the background if his all-important eldest son is present, and lets him do the honours even when

he is quite a boy. This is a pleasing feature of Indian family life, and the father evidently feels great pleasure in seeing his son and heir exercising the privileges of his position.

A brown country blanket was spread for us to sit upon, and Rama gavè orders concerning us. One of his men brought some of the raw sugar in a brass bowl, just after it had cooled and consolidated. Presumably this bowl was dedicated to the use of unclean persons like ourselves, otherwise our touching it would have made it useless for their own purposes; except that there are now so many exceptions to the old rules of greater strictness, that perhaps the usual polish with earth might be considered a sufficient purification. It was a pleasure to eat sugar which one knew for certain was free from all taint of adulteration. Meanwhile several lads and boys had harnessed themselves to the mill which presses out the juice of the sugar cane, in place of the bullocks who had gone off duty, and with great energy and much fun and laughter, made it revolve until enough juice had been pressed out for our refreshment. The sugar cane, looking and feeling like a thick bamboo walking-stick, does not suggest itself as an object from which juice could be extracted, but it pours out in streams as soon as the stalk comes between the rollers of the mill.

A lemon was squeezed into the bowl of juice, which we were told greatly improves its flavour,

and then we had a most refreshing drink. It was sweet and cool, but not sickly. There are places in Poona City where this drink can be obtained in its season for a farthing a glass, special crushing-mills being erected for the purpose. It is essential that the juice should be freshly procured, because if left to stand it quickly ferments, and it is then very intoxicating. We were next given some of the syrup out of the big pan which had just been taken off the fire. When poured into the moulds prepared for the purpose it consolidates as it cools. But it was rather like toffee at the stage when they put a lump of it into the palms of our hands, and as it was extremely sticky, it was a difficult matter getting rid of the after-effects; those who habitually use their fingers for all purposes appear to acquire the knack of doing so without getting their fingers into a mess.

Finally we were all provided with long sticks of the cane to take home with us, and this was the part of the entertainment which the boys valued most. But as teeth have to do the work of the crushing-mill, it was only the younger members of the party who were able to make personal use of the parting gift. We were also invited to look at Bulwantrao's gardens, and though the tidiness which distinguishes a cared-for English garden was missing, they were highly cultivated and contained a varied assortment. People of one country do not take readily to the natural produc-

tions of another country, especially their vegetables, but potatoes have become popular in India, in spite of their being small and tasteless. They are sold in all the native bazaars, and the poorer people buy them largely. Bulwantrao's garden was an illustration of what may be accomplished by intelligent cultivation under the influence of the heat of the tropics, combined with irrigation and manure. We were of course given specimens of such fruit and vegetables as were in season.

Darkness was rapidly taking the place of sunshine as we returned from this pleasant visit. There is a special charm about evening-tide in all parts of the world, and India is no exception; although evening in that country is peculiar and distinctive, and has the drawback that the twilight of the tropics is so brief. You are reading a book with ease, and ten minutes afterwards you can scarcely distinguish a letter. The sudden fall of night resembles the gloom produced by the rapid gathering of clouds before a thunderstorm in England, and gives for the moment a certain sense of sadness. In the last half-hour before sunset you see people hurrying along the roads and the many footpaths which intersect each other all over India, in order to get home before dark. The cattle which have been feeding all day on the hills and jungle lands come straggling home, and they respond slowly to the call for hurry, urged upon them forcibly by their young attendants. If you happen to be in one of the narrow gullies of a

village just at the time when the cattle are coming home, the position is an embarrassing one. There is scarcely room for them to pass, and they eye a stranger with suspicion. They turn in at their respective doorways as if they were the owners, and there is not much distinction between the quarters allotted to them and the dwelling-place of the family.

CHAPTER XLVII

EAST AND WEST ON BOARD SHIP

Christians and Hindu customs. The carpentry instructor; A taint of Hinduism; he retains his pigtail. Indians on their way to Europe; perplexities about bath and food. The Jain sect; their views. The Sikhs. Going to Germany for Sanskrit. Conversation of English-speaking Hindus. Indians on deck. East and West pull together. No room for the theosophist.

SOME missionaries advocate the retention by Christian converts of such Hindu customs as are not directly connected with idolatry, especially in connection with marriage ceremonies. Others maintain that it is impossible really to distinguish between what is innocent and what is not, and that the only safe course is to come out altogether and be separate. The elaborate restrictions concerning food, given to the children of Israel, were apparently chiefly designed to prevent them from mixing socially with the idolatrous people with whom they were surrounded, lest they should drop back into any of the old evil ways. For the same reason it would seem necessary in India for the Christian convert to separate himself from everything which is in any way distinctive of Hinduism, quite apart

from whether the thing itself is harmful or not. It is certain that lapses back to Hinduism have been most frequent amongst Christians of those Missions where the laxer view has prevailed.

An illustration somewhat to the point may be found in the case of the carpentry instructor in the Poona City Mission, who was a convert from Hinduism. He received the name of Bhumya at his baptism—his full name being Bhumya Virappa Chondikar. The second name was that of his father, which, according to Hindu custom, is always borne by the son, and the last was his family or surname. He did not improve his financial status by becoming a Christian. He was carpenter-master before, and continued to be so for many years afterwards. But his change of religion cut him off from any possibility of inheritance from Hindu relations, of whom he had several in rather prosperous circumstances. It also made such a ferment in his own household, where he had a wife and mother-in-law and little son, that he had to leave his home and lodge elsewhere so that he might not "pollute" them, as they would express it, by eating with them. Two years after his own baptism, however, he had the joy of seeing his wife and now *two* little children, baptized, and the home life was happily resumed. Eventually even his mother-in-law became a Christian.

But in spite of his own undoubted earnestness, his devout use of the sacraments, his constant attendance at all the services of the church, a

sort of taint of Hinduism clung to him all through life and to some extent dimmed his Christian joy, and prevented his example, in many ways so edifying, from bearing the fruit that might otherwise have been the case. None of his numerous Hindu friends were led to Christianity through his influence, and none of his own relations followed his example, nor was it possible to use him much in evangelistic work, in spite of his readiness to help. He had a theory that Christianity had somehow been evolved out of Hinduism, and though even his intimate friends could never get to the bottom of his strange ideas, his preaching was sufficiently unorthodox to make it necessary that he should be a silent member of the preaching party in the streets of the city.

The retention of Hindu ideas which thus warped his Christian life, and prevented it from influencing his fellow-countrymen as it otherwise might have done, may partly be accounted for by the fact that he not only retained in every particular after his baptism the outward garb of a Hindu and wore no Christian symbol, but his partially shaved head, and rather long pigtail which he continued to wear, were so definitely the outward tokens of Hinduism that he was often taken for a Hindu, and several people at various times were startled to see a heathen man, as they thought, collecting the alms in church.

The chief moral value of Bhumya's life is to be found in the fact that, in spite of Hindu memories continuing to have some mysterious attraction for him, he was both in life and death unswerving and unshaken in his allegiance to Christianity.

Certainly a P. & O. steamer can no longer be described as a "white man's ship," as the young officer expressed it when he complained of the presence of Indians on board. The number of Easterns who go to Europe for educational and other purposes increases so rapidly that they now form a distinct element on many steamers. One autumn when coming to England, half the passengers in the second saloon were Easterns on their way westwards, chiefly for educational purposes, and travelling at that season in order to be in time for the classes and colleges, which begin their new course or term in October. We calculated that there were nearly twenty different languages being talked amongst us, and there were few phases of religion unrepresented.

In the first saloon were a few wealthy Indian lads on their way to English public schools, clad in the most approved English boys' dress, and nearly all these travellers were in full European costume, though a few retained the turban. Some of the combinations of colour in the shape of socks and ties were rather startling. But Indians quickly correct any mistakes of this kind after they have reached England, and have had time to observe what well-dressed people usually wear. Many of

them were at first in great perplexity how to perform their ablutions in English baths, and the first morning or two they might be seen wandering about in the region of the baths with anxious faces. But they somehow found some solution to their difficulties, and ultimately distracted the man in charge of the baths by staying in long beyond the regulation ten minutes. "Too long," I heard the bathman say to one of these Indian gentlemen, who had been taking his bath in the leisurely fashion to which he had been accustomed in his own home. "*Not* too long," was the laconic reply.

The question of food is also a cause of great anxiety to some. "We are vegetarians," I heard one of them say to a ship's steward as he entered the saloon for his first meal, and the puzzled steward went off to consult his superiors as to what was to be done. But as the mere fact of crossing the seas to a foreign country constitutes a breach of caste, according to strict Hindu law, which will have to be atoned for on return, further breaches do not make much difference, and many of these travellers appear to enjoy their newly found liberty and eat freely all that is set before them, except that beef and pork are respectively avoided by Hindus and Mohammedans. Modern-minded Hindus even contend that to cross the seas does not break caste, and that their sacred writings support this view, and the matter has become the subject of long-drawn-out litigation by

aggrieved Hindus who have been out-casted on their return from foreign travel.

One of the voyagers belonged to the Jain sect amongst the Hindus, who take the most elaborate precautions to avoid even the accidental destruction of the smallest animal life. He had been prudent enough to bring a Jain with him to act as his cook; but this man becoming completely incapacitated by sea-sickness, his employer had to fall back upon such stores of dry food as he had with him, until the cook recovered. Indians are not good sailors, and a very moderate sea sent most of them to the seclusion of their cabins.

This Jain was going to London to become a barrister. He told me that his sect believes in the immortality of God, the soul, and matter. Hence the two last are as indestructible as the first. The world, therefore, will always exist, and each soul will continue to be transmigrated for any number of ages until it gets absorbed into God. Not to lead an exemplary life involves the unpleasant risk of reappearing in some debased form, and also delays the realisation of the final absorption. Their particularity about the taking of life presumably arises from the possibility that if you destroy even the humblest insect it may be a relation who has unfortunately had to assume this form, and causes even eggs to be classed amongst forbidden articles, because they contain the germ of life.

Three brothers, Sikhs, kept in their little inside cabin almost all the voyage, with the door and ventilators generally closed, and seemed perfectly content, except when prostrated by sea-sickness. They took all their meals there, and they were heard imploring their steward to be careful not to bring them any "beef." The smallness and stuffiness of their cabin perhaps recalled pleasantly their Indian home. They talked and laughed the whole day, and would have certainly done so half the night, except that the English occupant of the next cabin called upon them at bedtime and suggested that having talked all day it might be well for the sake of others to devote the night to sleep, and they cheerfully and courteously accepted the hint. Now and then, if it was very fine and smooth, they came on deck, but held no intercourse with the other Indian passengers, and played cards most of the time. They wore European coats and shirts, the tails of the latter being worn outside according to Indian custom. Their legs were cased in the white breeches peculiar to their race, very baggy in the upper part, but fitting so close below that the problem of how they get into them remains a mystery. On their heads were immense and picturesque white turbans. It was touching to see the extent to which the elder brother was looked up to, with that delightful combination of affection and respect characteristic of this particular relationship in India. They were gentle, courteous people, and everybody liked them.

An Indian, who called himself a Parsee, but there was reason to think that he was really a Bengali Hindu, was on his way to Germany to learn Sanskrit. As India is its home, although it is no longer a spoken language, except that Sanskrit words are found in many vernaculars, it appeared strange that an Indian should be travelling westwards in order to learn an Eastern language. But he explained that the Indian Pundits, or teachers, though they know Sanskrit, have no knowledge of how to teach it, and with characteristic disregard for the value of time, spend at least six years in teaching what, with more rational methods, might be learnt in two. In Germany this Indian hoped to see the most up-to-date way of teaching languages, and then he proposed to return to India and introduce the modern system in the college of which he said he was professor of Sanskrit.

Passing alongside the Italian coast, he said to me: "I hope very much to see Italy before I return to my own country. I understand that the Italian cathedrals are very beautiful, and a cathedral always appeals to me very strongly. I should also like to see Assisi. The character of S. Francis has great charms for me." I said that, with ideas such as these, he ought to be a Christian. "Possibly," he replied; "I have the greatest veneration for Christ as the greatest among prophets." English-speaking Hindus, however, have a remarkable power of adapting their

sentiments to their society. I overheard the same man contrasting, for the benefit of a young Egyptian, the way in which famine is dealt with in a native state and by the Government of India, by which it would appear that whereas the former did everything, the latter did nothing.

In the saloon the Indians naturally gathered to their own tables, but in fine weather they entered into the usual deck life of a liner, sat about in deck-chairs, made some show of reading, chiefly English light literature, made an attempt at the stereotyped deck games, played cards largely, and discovered that lemon-squash was a cooling drink, and those who could afford it went in for it often. They nearly all of them knew exactly where they were going to in London, and expected to be met by friends or relations already there. There are also many agencies and individuals who are ready to interest themselves in these young students, and to help them with advice and sympathy when they are willing to accept it. There are now quite a number of Indian houses in London where students lodge, and where they can arrange to have their food served in orthodox fashion. A few of these houses have at times become centres of mischief, and have had to be kept under observation.

The Indians on board lived very much in cliques, just as they do in their own country, and with few exceptions there was but little general interchange of ideas amongst themselves. Curiously

enough, the connecting link was to be found in the English population on board, who mixed with them all good-humouredly. That it is possible for East and West to meet on equal terms, and to dine in the same room if not at the same table, and to get on happily in daily intercourse, was proved by the pleasant way in which, within the narrow limits of a ship's second-class quarters, everybody managed to pull together. It was also a satisfactory feature of this medley of races and religions that the only person for whom there was no place, and who finally got sent to Coventry, was an Englishwoman who professed to be a theosophist.

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INDEX

AFFECTION, 15
Agricultural experiments, 329
Agriculture, 328; colleges of, 328
Animals, 176
Antelope, 177
Anthony, St, 245
Ants, 191; white, 191
Architecture, Indian view of, 17
Art, 60; degenerating, 60; Christian, 64
Artists, Indian, 63
Ascetics, 3, 196, 199; maxims for, 166

BAND, native, 102, 140; English, 102; "Europe," 102
Baptism, 23, 338; Nonconformist laxity concerning, 5, 86
Barbel tree, 197
Barber, 271
Bath, 110, 290, 293, 341
Beasts, wild, 170
Bees, 190
Beetles, 189
Beggars, feasts to, 12; Hindu religious, 201
Bells, bullocks', 324
Benson, Father, 156
Bhumya, his conversion, 338
Bible, quoted by Hindus, 4
Bile polar, festival for cattle, 245
Bin, musical instrument, 101
Birds, 185, 187; scaring, 271
Bishop, Indian, 93
Blacksmiths, 271
Blasting, 261
Blister beetle, 189
Bookbinding, 150
Books in India, 143, 148; prayer, 144, 149; price of, 149
Boundary stones, 221, 253
Boy, Indian, 161, 163, 168, 192
Brahmins, 84, 85, 164, 265; ladies, 23; thread, 122
Brain-fever bird, 185
Brass, its polish, 62
Bread, 109
Bribes, 296; on the railway, 296; in trade, 298
Buffalo, 179; the dead, 71
Bugs, 192
Bullocks, 324, 325; drawing water, 98
Bungalow, 292, 297
Burial, 71, 268
Butterflies, 195

CAMELS, 181
Card-playing, 117
Caretaker, the faithful, 28; his contentment, 29; his prayers, 30
Carpenters, 271
Carpets, 78
Caste, 167, 210, 278; breach of, 168, 237, 341
Catholic Church, 88, 96
Cattle, festival for, 245

Cemetery, Christian, 263; consecrated, 267; Cross, 267; Hindu, 173
Chairs, 56
Character, Indian, 24, 90, 157, 249, 254, 289; shallow, 158, 160, 166
Cheating labourers, 26, 30, 31
Choir-boys, 104
Chowdi, 215; sleeping in, 314
Christian art, 64, 65
Christian Indians, 5, 15, 209, 226; their hospitality, 13, 43; honesty, 242; respect for their mother, 14; dress for, 41; their expenses, 42; their unpunctuality, 51; their meals, 56, 236; *panchayat*, 68; their happiness, 115; their prayer books, 144, 149; houses, 254, 255
Church at Yerandawana, 19-23, 126, 155, 282
Clarke, Sir George, 103
Clergy, Indian, 89, 90, 91, 92
Clerk, Hindu village, 223, 224, 253
Cobra, 309, 310
Cockroaches, 190
Cold, 275; Indians sensitive to, 276
Collectors, 80, 230
Comfort, increase of, 299, 301
Confessions to police, 217
Confirmation, 94
Conversion of India, 83; of Brahmins, 84, 85; of low castes, 85; in famine time, 85
Cooking, particular about, 108; pots, 56, 271; graceful shape of, 61
Court, High, 212; petty, 212; Police, 214; Registrar's, 265
Courtesy of Indians, 231
Cricket, 130, 285
Crime, 217, 218
Crispin, St, church of, 65, 266
Crocodiles, 182
Cross, Southern, 182
Crows, 187
Customs of East and West, 234, 239, 284, 294

Dacoits, 314, 315
Dance, *nautch*, 76, 79; religious, 155, 156
Dasara, Hindu festival, 244
Daughter-in-law, 210, 211
Deer, 177
Defects of Indians, 2
Delhi, 177, 181, 196, 198; declaration at, 162
Delhi Mission News, 6
Dhobie, washerman, 43, 317; Christian, 318
Dhota, Hindu garment, 41, 44, 55, 79, 193, 198, 284
Dishonesty, Hindu, 27, 297
Dissenters, 289
Donkey, 179
Drawing, 18, 281
Dress, English, 40, 41, 42, 236, 291, 300, 301; Indian, 41, 44, 45, 46, 65, 236; policeman's, 46

East and West, customs of, 234, 239, 284, 294; travelling, 228, 234; on board ship, 231, 337, 340, 346
Education, 84; mistaken, 146, 283; effects of, 247, 286; rational, 283
Elephants, 180
Employers of labour, 24
English, dress, 40, 41, 42, 57, 343; workers, 95; letters in, 144; advertisements in, 145; literature for Indians, 146; the, in India, 288, 292
Entertainments, 74
European customs, 40; control, 89; compartment, 232; goods, 280
Evening-tide, 335
Eye-fly, 194

FACE, Hindu, 115, 208
Fakir, 196
Famine, 85
Feasts, to beggars, 12; village, 138
Fiction, India in, 143
Fingers, eating with, 236
Fire-flies, 183
Flattery, 119
Flies, 194
Flowers, offerings of, 18
Food, 107
Frost, 276
Fuel, 329
Furniture, 78

GAMES, 130, 285
Garlands, 19, 81, 230
Gifts, 263, 268
Gods, Hindu, 3, 120; conception of, 119, 120; burial of, 118; robbery of, 118
Golden Threshold, The, 111
Gosavies, 198
Government officials, 241
Governors, 238
Greetings, 305
Grinding, 98, 105
Gunpatti, Hindu god, 118
Guru, religious teacher, 202
Gymnasium, village, 137

HEBER, Bp., 288
High castes, 84, 208, 248, 306
Hindu college, visitors from, 21
Hinduism, 2, 5, 6, 117, 128; and Christianity, 4, 6, 115, 121, 128, 209, 244, 285, 337, 338; definitions of, 6-10
Hindus, nominal, 58, 59, 121; educated, 247
Hole, Mr W., pictures by, 127
Home life, absence of, 56; of Brahmin doctor, 57
Honesty, 226, 242, 243; of the *dhobie*, 322
Horses, 181
Hospitality, 11; Hindu customs concerning, 12; of Indian Christians, 13, 43
Houses, 249, 250, 254; how furnished, 55; Indian in London, 345
Howd, tank, 317
Hyderabad, the Nizam of, 112
Hymns, 104

IDOLATRY, 2, 208, 337
Immorality, 69
Inam, grant, 74, 264
Inamdar, 74; his house, 78
Insects, 188
Inspector, police, 215
Institute, Indian at Oxford, 45
Irrigation, 330
Itte-dhandu, boys' game, 135

JACKALS, 173
Jacob, Sir Swinton, 61
Jain, sect, 342
Jerome, the story of a Brahmin boy, 115
Jewellery, native, 62
Jeypore, museum at, 61

KALA, village of, 171
Kathiawar, 175
Khandala, 320
Kim's talk, 143
King, H.M. the, 153, 162
Kipling, Rudyard, 143, 175
Kite, bird, 187
Kites, 133
Krait, snake, 310

LABOUR, employers of, 24; dignity of, 129
Land, buying, 263
Landmark, neighbour's, 253
Language, 306
Law-courts, 119, 212
"Lawrence," the, school, 162
Lights, incandescent, 139, 272
Lion, 175

Litigation, 224
Locusts, 183
Low castes, 85, 278

Magisterial inquiry, 67
Mahars, low-caste, 70, 71, 214; boys, 72
Mantis, 195
Manure, 329; farmers and, 331
Map, 222
Marbles, 131
Marriage, 151; of widows, 206, 209
Meals, 55, 107, 207, 236; English and Indian, 107, 109, 238
Medicine-men, 315
Middleton, Bp., 291
Military display, 153, 154
Mills, grinding, 98, 105
Mineral waters, 139
Misconceptions about India, 1, 272, 273, 288
Mission work, 89; heads of, 94, 96
Mohammedans, 302; ascetics, 196; conception of heaven, 303; egg-merchant, 198, 200; and marriage, 302, 304; merchants, 303; saints, 75
Money, 225
Mongoose, 178
Monkeys, 177
Monsoon, 273-5
Moral maxims, 166; instruction, 286
Mosquitoes, 193; net for, 193
Mother, respect for, 13, 16; Swithun's, 15
Mother-in-law, 210, 211
Motor cars, 80, 181; bullocks and, 326
Music, 81, 98, 100, 101; Sir G. Clarke on, 103, 104
Musical instruments, 101

Naidu, Mrs Sarojini, 111; her portrait, 115
National characteristics, 141
Nature, illustrations from, 164; Indian view of, 17; the world of, 182
Nautch, dance, 76, 79
Neatness, lack of, 90, 91
Night, alarms, 309, 313; thieves, 251; travelling by, 99; watchmen, 312

Obedience, Indian, 25
Obstinacy, 159
Oman, Mr J. C., 166

Pageants, 151
Painting, mural, 64
Palaces, 60
Palanquin bearers, 100
Panchayat, committee of five, 66; Christian, 68
Pan supari, leaf and betel nut, 75, 80; party, 76
Panther, 172
Paper, daily, 300; vernacular, 301
Parsees, 48, 65, 125, 186, 271
Patel, headman, 71, 213, 214, 316; his gift, 264
Patience, 92
Payments, how made, 26
Persian visitors, 126
Philosophy, Hindu, 111
Pictures, from England, 63; by Indian artists, 63
Pigs, wild, 178
Plague Refuge Camp, 281
Pleaders, 225
Plural, use of, 306
Poetry, 112
Police, 213; umbrellas for, 279
Political unrest, 131, 280
Poona City, 77, 164, 281; ancient houses in, 60, 61; modern houses in, 60, 61, 257
Post, cards, 34; offices, 33; postman, 38; post-runners, 32
Postal privileges, 36; service, 32; train-sorters, 35

Potatoes, 335
Potter, 271
Poverty, 54, 108, 225
Prayer, Hindu, 30, 121
Prayer Book valued, 144
Printing, 149
Processions, 151; funeral, 152; religious, 154
Projects, unfinished, 158, 256; imaginary, 257
Property, 221
Proverbial sayings, 270
Psalm cl., 156
Punishment, 161, 213
Purdah women, 81
Purity, 70
Pusa College, 328

Religion, 117; true, 240
Religious controversy, 164; phases, 124
Repartee, 129
Rest-house, 99
Rewards, government, 172
Rivers, 77, 183, 319
Robbery, by train-sorters, 35; in temples, 118
Roman Catholics, 87, 124, 290
Rudeness, to employers, 24, 25; to Indians, 228

Sacred books, Hindu, 3
Salvation Army, 290
Sanskrit, 344
Scenery, oblivious to, 17
Schoolboys, 219; Hindu, 283, 340
Scorpions, 191
Sects, 87, 88
Servants, 295, 297; punctuality, 52; Christian, 242, 244, 269; heathen, 243; of Europeans, 72, 237, 238, 241
Shiggram, carriage, 299
Shinde, pigtail, 284, 339
Shoes, 299
Shops, 300
Sikhs, 343
Singing, 81, 98, 99, 100, 103, 140
Slang, 147
Smell of India, 305
Snakes, 293, 309, 312
Socks, 299
Soldiers, 100
Son, eldest, 332
Sparrows, 186
Spiders, 192
Spirit, Holy, 97
Squirrel, 176
State, native, 119
Station-masters, Indian, 49
Sugar cane, 331; parties, 332; juice, 333
Sun, 277; caution about, 290
Survey Department, 222
Swallows, 186
Swearing, 125, 147
Swithun's mother, 15
Symons, Mr Arthur, 111

Telegrams, 37; abuse of, 37
Temples, Hindu, 122; behaviour in, 117
Thackeray, Mr, 195
Thieving, 218, 250
Tigers, 170; den, 173; tigress, 173
Tilak, Mr, 120, 281
Tips, 269
Titles, 74
Tomb, Mohammedan, 79, 196
Tom Tiddler's ground, 136
Toothbrush, 235
Tops, 132
Torture, 213, 217, 218
Trades, 270; ancestral, 323
"Traveller's tale," 182
Tulsi plant, 58, 208
Tunes, 103; Indian, for hymns, 104
Turban, 44, 284, 343

Umbrellas, 278
Unfinished projects, 158, 256, 258, 260

Unpunctuality, 48; instance of, 49; on the railway, 48, 49; at meals, 52, 53; incurable, 50, 51; amongst Christians, 51, 92, 93, 94; illustration from parables, 52
Unrest, political, 278, 280

Villages, 66
Vultures, 186

Washerman, 317
Wasps, 190
Watchmen, night, 72
Wells, 258, 260
Widows, Hindu, 22, 204; at Yerandawana, 206; garments of, 205; Home for, 205, 207, 299; marriage of, 206, 209
Windows, 56
Wolf-boys, 174
Wolves, 174
Women, their dress, 44, 65; their meals, 55; *purdah*, 81; grinding, 98, 105, 106
Work, low ideal of, 295
Wrestling, 137; prizes for, 138; competitions, 140
Wrongdoing, 212, 217, 218

Xavier, St Francis, 97

Yerandawana, 15, 18, 19, 33, 74, 126, 154, 196, 202, 206, 263
Yonge, Miss, 21

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